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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. BARTON of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 16, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOE BARTON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 17, 2012, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. The Violence Against Women Act has been one of the great legislative successes of the last two decades. Since it was first signed into law by President Clinton, there is no question that it has helped millions of women by funding a variety of community violence protection programs and a variety of victim assistance services from coast to coast while providing a legal framework for protection. Republicans and Democrats alike have supported the legislation in all subsequent reauthorizations because of the recognition for the vital nature of the services that are provided and the impact that it has not just on women, but on the children in these families. That's why it was reauthorized in 2000 and then again in 2005 under a Republican administration with President Bush.

In this Congress, that tradition of bipartisan support continues in the Senate, which has approved a stronger version of the legislation developed in the Senate Judiciary Committee, cosponsored by both Chair LEAHY and Ranking Member CRAPO. Sadly, it's facing a decidedly different fate in the House.

Once again, the Republican majority is advancing legislation by one of their new Members that is designed not to bring people together to solve problems, but to create unnecessary divisions. Their bill would actually roll back, for the first time, these established rights rather than increase them. The House legislation would fail to provide protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual individuals. It would fail Native American victims who are assaulted on tribal lands by nontribal predators. The bill would discourage immigrants from reporting sexual assaults and other crimes by placing unnecessary restrictions on new visa programs and not increase the emergency visas for individuals who immigrate to the United States on a marriage or fiancee visa and are subject to an abusive relationship.

Not only does the House bill miss these opportunities, but it would remove the current confidentiality protections for victims who still had immigrant status. It would inexplicably reduce violence reporting requirements on colleges and universities. These are all tools widely used and supported by law enforcement officials to help keep communities safe by prosecuting criminals and protecting victims.

The House bill would decentralize the Violence Against Women immigration adjudication process, bypassing examiners who are trained in domestic violence and sexual assault, instead, mandating additional interviews on battered immigrants. These are people who usually have very limited options to protect themselves. We should not complicate the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in the United States. These victims of violence—usually women in the most difficult of circumstances—will be burdened, hindered, and discouraged from seeking and getting the help they need.

The House bill would represent the triumph of ideological partisan politics over solid legislation with an opportunity for solid bipartisan support. It should be firmly rejected.

Instead, the House should use this opportunity to build on a record of proven success, bipartisan cooperation, and a commitment to strengthening the protection of society's most vulnerable by using the Senate bill as a template. These victims and potential victims deserve no less. They, their families, and the communities they live in deserve no less.

Domestic violence is an assault on the entire community and should not be tolerated. We should not retreat on the Violence Against Women Act, but strengthen it by using the Senate bill as a point of departure and reject the House version.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

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

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, as a foster parent, a father of two adopted children, and a cochairman of the bipartisan Congressional Foster Youth

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Caucus, I rise today to recognize May as National Foster Care Month.

There are currently over 107,000 foster youth eligible and waiting for adoption and more than 400,000 youth in the foster care system. In an effort to raise awareness about the needs and the experience of these youth, I am honored to join my colleagues in a bipartisan manner to acknowledge the importance of this special month.

Through increased understanding and dedicated caregivers, we can and must continue to make important advances in providing more stable and caring environments for all foster youth. We must focus on learning from State and local child welfare providers, advocates, and foster children to better know how we can help. The needs of these youth are urgent and real. And while there are many alarming facts and figures that reflect the challenges these children face, the resiliency of foster youth remains strong; and we must all continue to do our part. Together, we can make National Foster Care Month a success.

FOSTER CARE MONTH

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

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as National Foster Care Month. The goal of this month is to raise awareness about the experiences and needs of more than 400,000 youth in the foster care system.

Throughout the month, members of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth will share stories of foster youth in their districts. Today I would like to share a story from my constituent Kevin, a young man from Hollywood, California.

□ 1010

His story is unique, yet his resiliency is characteristic of hundreds of thousands of foster youth across our Nation.

Kevin was born into a family addicted to crack cocaine. He was removed from his parents at the age of 2, after a near-death drowning experience. After years in a group home, he was placed with a legal guardian. But this placement was difficult. Kevin was placed back with his biological mother, until she was incarcerated for the third time, leaving Kevin with no place to go.

In the face of all these challenges, Kevin has persevered. He recently transferred from community college with a full-ride scholarship and a 3.8 GPA. He plans to become a professor in the social sciences.

About his time in and out of foster care, Kevin says:

I am extremely grateful for the opportunities I have had because they allow me to identify and connect with a broad range of people.

Today, in honor of Kevin's courage and tenacity, I join my fellow cochairs of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth and with Representative TOM MARINO, as well as over 90 of our colleagues in the House and the Senate, in introducing a bipartisan, bicameral resolution in recognition of National Foster Care Month. I invite my colleagues to cosponsor the bipartisan resolution as well as join the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth.

THANKING OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. DOLD. This Memorial Day we will take time to remember those who have given their lives to keep our Nation safe and free. So many brave men and women have given the ultimate sacrifice to ensure that we can enjoy the very freedoms and liberties that we all enjoy today. I want to thank all of those who are currently serving, those who have served, and their families for putting our Nation first. America is a stronger and better Nation because of your sacrifice and service.

Recently, veterans from Illinois came to Washington, D.C., and it was truly an honor and pleasure to meet the Illinois Honor Flight at the World War II Memorial, not only to hear their stories, but to have an opportunity to talk with these true heroes and learn more about their friends, those who made it back and those who didn't. The heroic efforts of the men and women of World War II—and I would argue from all of our conflicts—helped keep our Nation safe and away from harm's way. I cannot thank them enough for all they have done for our country.

Last month, I had the privilege of presenting two veterans from Illinois's 10th Congressional District with their medals that had not been presented. These men served their country with distinction and deserve the medals that they have earned.

George Ott, from Arlington Heights, served as an Air Force staff sergeant in the 6th Aircraft Repair Unit during World War II. He served from 1944 to 1946, serving in the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, and Japan. I was able to present him with the World War II Victory Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, and the Army Good Conduct Medal.

Thomas Vana, of Des Plaines, was another veteran I was able to serve and present medals. He served as a sergeant in the 2nd Infantry Division during the Korean War. He served as an Active Duty medic from 1970 to 1974. I was able to present him with the Army Good Conduct Medal and the Korea Defense Service Medal.

Beyond working directly with veterans, Mr. Speaker, to ensure they receive the recognition that they have earned, my office is also working with veterans to document their stories. The Veterans History Project is an ongoing effort by the Library of Congress to collect stories and photos to learn more about those who have served in battle and conflict not only at home, but overseas. My office is open to anyone who would like to document their story and share their experiences with the American public. It's important that we preserve these records, Mr. Speaker, so that future generations know the sacrifices that our men and women in the military have made. I would encourage anyone from the 10th District in Illinois who has served to call the Northbrook office at (847) 272–0404 and share your story so that we can preserve it for years and years to come.

I want to thank all those who have served, those that are serving currently, and those that have given their lives to protect our country. This Memorial Day I believe that we must honor those who have fallen and never forget the sacrifices that they have made to make sure that our country remains safe and free.

THE MODERN TAX SYSTEM: FAIR TO THE AVERAGE AMERICAN?

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

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, in April, the Johnstown-Somerset Central Labor Council announced the winners of its annual scholarship essay contest. This year's first-place winner, Lisa Vatavuk, wrote an essay entitled: ''The Modern Tax System: Fair to the Average American?''

I would like to read Lisa's essay, as it has particular meaning to our current tax and budget debate:

Dating back to ancient Egypt in the year 3000 BCE, taxes have been a familiar part of society for almost as long as civilizations have existed. So how do taxes affect the current citizens of the United States? Today's tax system affects all three classes in different ways. Unfortunately, in the United States, taxation hits the average middle class family the hardest out of all three demographics.

The United States follows a progressive taxing system. This means that, ideally, families in the lowest income brackets pay the lowest percentage of taxes, while families in the highest income brackets pay the highest percentage. However, this system of taxation is flawed. Because the Bush administration cut taxes for the wealthy, families in the top income brackets pay much lower tax rates than the progressive system calls for. Also, because taxes include sales taxes, property taxes, and other kinds of taxes in addition to income taxes, families in the highest income tax brackets almost always pay lower percentages of their income in their total taxes than low and working class families. In addition, because State and local taxes are typically regressive rather than progressive, low and middle class families are given a higher percentage of taxes than wealthy families. In 2007, out of all the income brackets, families in the middle-income bracket paid the highest percent of their income in their total taxes in Washington, D.C., Maine, Minnesota, New York, South Carolina, and Vermont. In the vast majority of the remaining States, the lowest-income families paid the highest tax percentage, and the highest-income families

paid the lowest. There were no States in 2007 in which the wealthy families paid taxes at a higher rate than the middle and low classes.

The current tax system affects families in high-income brackets much differently than it affects those in the low- and middle-income brackets. First, wealthy families receive many tax deductions. The government, on average, pays for about 35 percent of high-income families' taxes. A second way in which the wealthy are not affected by the tax system as much as lower class families is that they generally do not have to pay as much income tax. The average millionaire does not earn their money from working; they earn money from their investments. Taxes on long-term investments are lower than taxes on income because the government wants to encourage consumers to spend money. However, this means that wealthy families that earn money from investments pay lower taxes than middle- and low-income working families.

Finally, the families in the top income brackets are almost never hurt by the current tax system because some politicians do all they can to protect the wealthy. Some politicians believe that as long as the wealthy families have money to spare, they will make investments that will benefit the economy and the lower classes. While this theory may or may not be true, the higher classes continue to have lower tax rates than the middle and low classes. The United States' current tax system clearly benefits wealthy families.

Wealthy families are not the only ones that benefit from this system of taxation in the United States. Poor families are often given benefits as well. While families in high-income tax brackets receive many breaks on their taxes, they are not the only people that receive these breaks. Families that are considered to be in poverty by the United States Government are many times given breaks on their taxes as well. For example, the Earned Income Tax Credit, or EITC, is given to many low-income families in this country. This tax credit gives families money back to help relieve the burden of taxes. In some cases, the EITC gives families back more money than they originally paid in government taxes. In some cases, poor families also receive benefits from the current tax system because in some cases the members of the family do not work. In families in which no one works, there are no income taxes or payroll taxes. These families instead receive assistance from welfare. There is no tax on money received from welfare, so families receiving this aid that do not earn additional income from a job do not pay any income taxes. Consequently, the tax system in the United States can be beneficial to low-income families.

In the current tax system, there are certain advantages to being in either high-income families or low-income families, but what happens to those families that fall in the middle? The majority of Americans are hardworking citizens that earn a moderate salary. These citizens are the ones that have to pay for the benefits that others receive. For example, when the wealthy receive tax deductions, the government receives less money as revenue, and the people that fall in the middle are the ones that suffer.

The less money the government has, the less it can provide funding to programs that benefit middle-income families, such as education funding, libraries, and government aid for skyrocketing college costs. A second way in which the middle class is hurt by tax deductions is when poor families receive tax credits. As previously mentioned, sometimes when families receive the EITC, they receive more money from the government than they originally paid.

This money comes from money taken straight from taxpayers. Middle-income families are many times forced to pay the highest tax rates out of any of the income brackets, and they receive no special treatment from the United States government.

In conclusion, in the United States today, most of the burdens of taxation are put onto the average middle-income working families. The system of taxation is extremely unfair for working families; they work their entire lives to have a large part of their income taken away from them by the government when people in both high- and low-income brackets receive special treatment from the government. The average American family falls in the middle-income category, and in the current tax system, this family, the heart and soul of America, is the one that ultimately suffers.

□ 1020

HONORING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the nearly 1 million law enforcement officers who work day and night to protect all of us. All of us sleep more soundly at night knowing that the brave men and women of law enforcement are in our communities patrolling, protecting, and watching over our homes and businesses. They do so bravely and selflessly, and they do not ask for recognition. They put their lives on the line knowing the risks, and they take those risks on with unwavering courage.

I worked for 33 years as a law enforcement officer before I came to Congress. I didn't do that because I wanted to be the sheriff of King County in Seattle. I didn't do it because I wanted to be a Member of Congress. I did it because I wanted to serve my community by protecting it and making a difference. I found that I wasn't alone. Each of my law enforcement colleagues carried in them the heart of a servant.

So this week, National Police Week, is bittersweet for all of us in law enforcement because we remember the tragedy of our fellow officers' loss. Already this year, 40 officers have been killed in the line of duty.

Tuesday was Peace Officer Memorial Day, a day to remember the brave brothers and sisters killed in the line of duty. We've lost them; they're gone, but they're not forgotten.

Why do law enforcement officers come together today during this week in Washington, D.C., and on this memorial event? To share the fellowship and remember, because we made a promise. Everyone in this room has made a promise and everyone across this country has made a promise, Mr. Speaker, to never forget—to never forget the pain, the suffering, the feeling of great loss, the brokenness of families, the sadness that will touch that family for the rest of their lives. We made a promise to never forget not only those sad times, the feelings of brokenness and loneliness, but those good times, the funny stories we hear.

I have two friends killed in the line of duty, one in June of 1982. He was my good friend and partner, Sam Hicks. He was shot and killed. But I remember a night when he and I, together, went to catch a robber. We surrounded the house, just the two of us. It was pitch dark outside, and all of a sudden I heard Sam scream, Run, DAVE, run.

So when Sam said ''run,'' I ran. And I ran. Then I heard a barking dog. I looked and saw that Sam was being chased by a large dog. Sam and I jumped in our police car and I peeled out, headed out of the driveway because the lights were coming on inside the house where the robber was, and I began to smell something a little bit funny. Well, what happened is that Sam decided he was going to mace the dog, but instead he maced himself.

That's one of the stories I remember about my good friend Sam. He also taught me how to tie a tie. I only know one knot. It's the knot that I'm wearing today.

My good friend, Mike Raburn, who went to the academy with me, saved my life one night. I was directing traffic in Federal Way just south of Seattle, and I didn't know it, but someone behind me had run up behind me with a knife with the knife raised in the air. Mike had just driven up, and the guy was running toward me to stick the knife in my back. Mike tackled him and saved my life.

I remember those good times. I remember those bad times. We can never forget the sacrifice of our law enforcement men and women. We are all safe today. You can be in this Hall today, Mr. Speaker. We can all be here today, we can walk on the streets safe knowing that our brothers and sisters in law enforcement are there to protect us.

Now, you can help them. This week we passed the Blue Alert bill. All you need to do is watch for those, like those AMBER Alert, the Blue Alert signals on your freeway signs. If an officer has been shot or killed, you'll see information on those signs. Call in.

We can work together to keep the communities safe, because if they hurt a cop, if they kill a cop, they'll hurt somebody, somebody in the community. So help us by participating in Blue Alert.

And also, I ask of you today, Mr. Speaker, and everyone listening across the great Nation of this United States of America to never forget.

God bless you. Thank you.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

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

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and to recognize

the many contributions that Asian and Pacific Americans make to our great Nation.

I commend Congresswoman JUDY CHU, who is the chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and also Congressman MIKE HONDA, the caucus' chair emeritus, for their leadership and for their efforts on behalf of our communities.

Our caucus represents a very large and a diverse community. The cultures that are represented in our caucus highlight many, many unique traditions, languages, and histories. Despite our diverse backgrounds, Asian Pacific Americans are committed to improving our country every single day.

Today, more than 18.5 million Asians and Pacific Islanders call America their home—18.5 million. We have become the fastest growing minority community in the United States, having increased by more than 40 percent in the last 10 years.

Asian Pacific Americans contribute to every aspect of our lives, from business to education, health care to public relations, sports and recreation to the arts, government, and the Armed Services. Our businesses employ more than 2.8 million workers, who generate more than $512 billion in annual revenues to our economy. Two Cabinet Secretaries, Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki, are of APA descent, and APAs currently represent 13 congressional districts and serve in 15 State legislatures. Further, in the last 3 years, the number of judges serving in the Federal judiciary has more than doubled, its highest level in our country's entire history.

From the very beginning, the Asian Pacific American community has sought better opportunities or to escape persecution in their homeland. These can be seen with each particular group: in the experiences of the first Chinese laborers who came to build the transcontinental railroads, the first Japanese workers who worked on plantations in Hawaii, and the first Vietnamese refugees who arrived because of war, and countless APA groups with similar stories. Asian Pacific American history is the larger American story of valuing freedom, continuously working to make our Nation great and giving our children a better future than the ones we have.

I represent the people of Guam. I represent the U.S. Territory of Guam. The people are an important part of our Asian Pacific American community and are extremely loyal and proud of their citizenship. Case in point, this year will mark the 68th anniversary of the liberation of Guam from a brutal enemy occupation during World War II and the return of freedom to the island as part of the American family. Guam has one of the highest per capita casualties in the more than a decade that our country has been at war, yet our people continue to enter military service as a calling to serve their country. And our island is being called upon to sustain one of the most complex and important force posture realignments in the history of the United States. Today, per capita, we also are number one when it comes to people who serve in the National Guard. Guam is number one per capita.

□ 1030

This May, we once again celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Despite the many successes that the APA community has experienced, there is still so very much to be done. APA Heritage Month is a celebration of our diversity, a recognition of the sacrifices and the contributions that Asian Pacific Americans make to our Nation, and an opportunity to educate all Americans of the unique role that our community plays in our country.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, or as we say in Guam, Si Yu'os Ma'ase—thank you, and God be with you.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO BISHOP BARNETT K. THOROUGHGOOD

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

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize, to honor, and to pay tribute to the life of Bishop Barnett K. Thoroughgood, founder of New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ in Virginia Beach, who passed away too early from this Earth in February. He was a man of God, an inspiring leader, a tremendous, positive influence in our community, and a truly outstanding American.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to please help me welcome his family here today, his wife of 39 years, Ernestine; son, Jonathan; daughter, Mekia; handsome grandson, Caleb—who was just in my office—and many other distinguished guests who have come with the family today.

I think the measure of a man or a woman is the legacy they leave to their children, and the legacy left by Bishop Thoroughgood is exemplary. The good bishop dedicated his life to serving God, his fellow man, and his community. He was a titan in the field of human rights. He was loved by fellow clergy and the community in which he served. He was a truly gifted speaker, and he used that gift to be a blessing to others. This is what was written about the bishop in the Virginia Pilot:

> Bishop Thoroughgood liked to say he started preaching at the age of five, when he spent many days sharing Jesus with the prison work crews that came to clean ditches in his Seatack neighborhood. At 20 years old, he started the New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ. Across his career, he received many educational honors leading to his doctorate of ministry. He served as the district superintendent to the Virginia Beach district and second administrative assistant to Bishop Samuel L. Greene, Jr.

He was amazingly active in the community and received so many awards that if I read them out today, I think it would fill the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

He also served as a member of the Virginia Beach Clergy Association and Ministerial Alliance. He was the founder and president of the Hampton Roads Ecumenical Council of Bishops. He led mission trips to Haiti and outreach to the poor.

His sermons were literally broadcast around the world. So many were touched by his words, which I think explains why at the wake the night before his funeral 2,500 people were there, and 4,000 folks showed up to the funeral. I was honored to share just a few words with the family.

I just ask that God would bless the family and watch over them, give them peace, and that the message that the bishop had lived his life conveying would be continued. That truly is the way, I believe, we honor the bishop's life is by continuing his work, his compassion for others, his commitment to making sure that all Americans cross the finish line, always centered on family, always centered on God, and always mindful of his obligations as an American.

Bishop Thoroughgood leaves to cherish his memories, again, his lovely wife, Ernestine Thoroughgood; his sons, Bertram, Emmanuel, and Jonathan; daughter, Mekia; four brothers—large family, wonderful family that we had here this morning—five grandchildren, and many children they've adopted and helped through the social services foster care program; the New Jerusalem Church family; and the members of the Church of God in Christ worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, I close as I began, just knowing that it's a high honor to pay tribute to his life. I think it embodies the very best of what it means to be an American, to be part of our Hampton Roads community, and to be a Virginian.

So with that, I ask God's continued grace on the family.

ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE MONTH

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

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, this month is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. It is a time for us to take pride in our country's diversity and to celebrate the ways in which Asian Pacific Americans have contributed to the vibrancy of our Nation.

Today, Asian Pacific Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the country and now account for nearly 6 percent of the total population. Asian Pacific Americans are an incredibly diverse group comprised of over 45 distinct ethnicities and speaking over 100 different language dialects. We are represented in every arena of American life, from college presidents to public servants and CEOs, and even to an NBA basketball star, Jeremy Lin.

This year marks a number of historic milestones for the Asian Pacific American community, including the 20th year since the formal establishment of APA Heritage Month; the 100th anniversary of the planting of the first cherry blossoms in our Nation's Capital; and the 150th year since the passage of the Pacific Railroad Act, which led to the construction of the transcontinental railroad.

This year also marks the anniversary of several painful events in our history: 130 years since the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a discriminatory piece of legislation which prevented people of Chinese ancestry from becoming naturalized citizens and from ever having the right to vote; 70 years since the signing of Executive Order 9066, which led to the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II; and 30 years since the unpunished murder of Vincent Chin in Detroit by two unemployed autoworkers who blamed him and all Asian Americans for the loss of their jobs.

Although our history has indicated great progress since the days of discrimination, it is important to continue to remember our history in order to protect the civil rights of all Americans and to prevent these atrocities from ever happening again.

As chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, or CAPAC, I have the privilege of advocating for the APA community's needs and priorities on a broad range of issues, including civil rights, health care, economic justice, and immigration reform. This year, our caucus welcomed 12 new Congress Members, bringing our total to a record high of 42 members. This means that CAPAC will be able to serve as an even stronger voice for the Asian Pacific community at all levels.

As the Asian Pacific community continues to grow across the Nation—not just in traditional strongholds like California, Hawaii, or New York, but also in States like Texas, Georgia, and Nevada—my colleagues and I will continue to ensure that the needs of the APA community are included as we push for policies that re-ignite the American Dream for all.

So as we celebrate Asian Pacific Heritage Month this May, I hope you will join me and remember the many contributions that Asian Pacific Americans have made to our great country.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE BUILDING WEEK

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

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on energy-efficient buildings—we're talking about schools, factories, department stores, shopping centers, any type of a large building or even a small building—and the money they can save and the manufacturing jobs that energy-efficient initiatives can create.

This week, architects, code officials, designers, and others involved in making buildings more energy efficient celebrate High-Performance Building Week. This annual event features briefings, meetings, and other educational outlets designed to showcase and promote the good work being done to provide better buildings and mitigate the impact on the environment.

Building owners and operators continue to find creative ways to minimize the effect that rising energy costs have on their operations and productivity. These owners and operators are beginning to find that better designs of new buildings and smart retrofits of existing buildings free up capital and allow managers to commit more resources to the core operations rather than to utility bills.

The State of Montana decided to make its buildings more energy efficient. They brought in engineers to do the study, and they found that over 7,500 pipes needed to have mechanical insulation. These are pipes that needed to be wrapped.

□ 1040

And so they undertook that project. And what's interesting is that the payback was less than 4 years. But each year the State of Montana saves 5 to 8 percent in energy costs on those buildings. That's a massive savings of energy in this country.

One of the easiest, most cost-effective ways to improve building performance is to ensure the mechanical insulation systems are properly installed. While most of us think that insulation is only for walls and attics, mechanical insulation is a vital component for commercial and industrial and educational applications.

Working with my colleagues, I introduced H.R. 2866, the Mechanical Insulation Incentive Act of 2011, last year to help commercial and industrial facility owners make their facilities more energy efficient and put people back to work.

Improved insulation for piping and mechanical components in commercial and industrial settings will help save businesses more than $4.8 billion a year, according to the National Insulation Association. These improvements will also save resources to the tune of 82 million barrels of oil or 19 million tons of coal each year. And it's probably more than that.

I ask my colleagues to consider supporting H.R. 2866. It's a commonsense bill that will save money, improve facility operations, put people back to work, and help our buildings perform to a higher standard.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saluting the hard work that our Nation's architects, engineers, and building professionals do to improve the condition of our homes, schools, and businesses.

I also want to ask my colleagues to participate in some of the events being held this week in honor of High-Performance Building Week.

I yield back the balance of my time.

SUPPORT EXTENSION OF THE COLLEGE COST REDUCTION ACT

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in 45 days, the interest rate on the Stafford Student Loan program is going to double from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent.

As millions of American families know, the Stafford Student Loan program is the workhorse for middle class students trying to pay for college. It is a program which has an affordable interest rate. It provides protections for students so that interest doesn't accumulate while you're actually in school. It provides a grace period after you graduate. And it also has a cap in terms of how much of your income has to be devoted to Stafford loan repayments.

In 2007, as a freshman Member of Congress, I was proud to have been a cosponsor of the College Cost Reduction Act, which cut that rate from 6.8 to 3.4 percent. It was a 5-year bill, like many measures that Congress passes; and that expiration, that sunset, will occur on July 1, 45 days from today, when that rate will double back to 6.8 percent.

Last week the Senate made an attempt to try and take up legislation to protect that lower rate. Sadly, the Republican minority used the filibuster rule to block not even just the bill, but even a debate on the bill. I repeat: they didn't even use the filibuster rule as a block of all Republicans to vote against the measure. They actually used the filibuster to even allow consideration of debate.

And, again, the leader in the Senate made it very clear if they had alternatives to the Senate bill which would protect the lower rate, they were more than free to offer their own amendments.

So here we are today, with students trying to plan for next fall's college, with kids getting their acceptance letters for next year, and yet they have no ability to budget or plan in terms of what the interest rate for this workhorse program to pay for college allows.

Now, how did we get to this place?

As I indicated, in 2007 we cut the rate. Back in January, President Obama stood at that very podium and challenged Congress to not allow the rate to double. For three solid months, nothing happened in this Chamber. There was not a single hearing at the Education and Workforce Committee. There was not a bill for markup. The only action was legislation that I proposed. H.R. 3826, which has over 150 cosponsors in this Chamber, on a bipartisan basis, which would lock in that rate permanently, has never been taken up for consideration.

Two-and-a-half weeks ago, Speaker BOEHNER who, by the way, voted

against the College Cost Reduction Act in 2007, rushed to the floor a bill for a 1-year Band-Aid, and used as a pay-for depleting resources and funds from a program that would help folks with heart, cardiac, cervical cancer screening, diabetes screening, early childhood disease screening. They took money out of that fund to help desperate Americans to try and put a 1-year fix on the student loan issue.

President Obama made it very clear that bill is a dead letter. A veto threat was issued even before we voted in this Chamber. So here we are 45 days away waiting for action.

H.R. 3826, a measure which permanently locks in the lower rate, is at least a first step in terms of dealing with the crisis in this country of student loan debt, which now exceeds credit card debt and car loan debt. We have an issue here which threatens the future viability of this country to succeed and compete in the world global economy where we need a cutting-edge workforce if we're ever going to succeed in the future.

Forty-six days from today we are going to be celebrating the 150th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln signing into law a measure called the Moral Act. The Moral Act set up a national policy establishing land grant colleges in all 50 States in this country. Back then its mission was to establish programs for mechanical engineering and agricultural sciences.

What an amazing act of vision and leadership. In the darkest days of the Civil War, 1862, President Lincoln still had the long view and understood that if, as a Nation, we are going to succeed, we need a national policy for higher education. And in his wake, the Stafford loan program was created, sponsored by a Republican, Robert Stafford of Vermont. The Pell Grant program was established by Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island, all to provide the building blocks so that young people have that opportunity and the ability to pursue their dreams and to pursue their skill set, the true key of success in this Nation.

We are a Nation that is blessed with great natural resources. We have the greatest military in the world. We have great financial institutions. But the real success of this country is our broad-based middle class where education provides the foundation for families and students to succeed.

That clock is ticking. I started this running at 110 days, and we're now down to 45 days. It is time for the Senate Republicans to drop the filibuster, allow consideration of the bill to help middle class families as they deal with next year's tuition costs, and pass H.R. 3826 in the House of Representatives.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Tom Ellsworth, Sherwood Oaks Christian Church, Bloomington, Indiana, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, mere words are inadequate to express our deep gratitude for the privilege of living in such a great land. You have graciously guided this Nation in the past. I pray that You will continue to bless it in the days ahead.

For all who have served in the past, and for all who currently serve within these hallowed walls, we give You our thanks. Bless them and their families.

I pray, Lord, that You will encourage them on the days when they are criticized more than cheered. Give them strength under stress, peace under pressure, and wisdom under the weight of the burdens they carry.

Fill them with Your insight and divine perspective. Give them good judgment in the decisions they make. Guide their thoughts and intentions to reflect Your timeless values. And in the Nation's business of this day, grant them success.

In Christ I pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. MCINTYRE 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 TOM ELLSWORTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

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

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. I want to thank my friend, Tom Ellsworth, and his wife, Elsie, for traveling all the way from Bloomington, Indiana, to deliver this morning's open prayer.

Tom has devoted his life to ministry. He is senior minister to me, my wife, Jenny, our four children, and so many other Hoosiers at Sherwood Oaks Christian Church in Bloomington.

2012 marks the 50th year since Sherwood Oaks was founded. To mark the celebration, Tom has thrown down the gauntlet. Our church will pray, give, and serve like never before. Tom is challenging more of us to become the hands and feet of God, serving our neighbors, our country, and beyond.

Tom understands that our Nation, in fact any nation worthy of the name, was built by selfless servants, people like the 55 members of our church who recently activated their faith to help out tornado victims in southern Indiana. America needs more such servants and more people like Tom to inspire us to service.

Thank you for making a difference, Tom.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

THE STUDY OF THE STUDY OF THE STUDIES

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the military spends a lot of money studying, presumably, the effectiveness of military programs. In fact, there are numerous military studies of military programs. So many, the Department of Defense has commissioned a study of those numerous studies to see how much those studies cost.

Stay with me, Mr. Speaker. Now, the Government Accountability Office has done their own study of the military study that is studying the cost of numerous military studies that are studying the cost and effectiveness of military programs.

The GAO has concluded its study that the military study of the studies is incomplete, inconclusive, and inconsistent. So we really don't know how effective or costly those military studies are. Meanwhile, the cost of the GAO study has not been studied yet.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this short study of the government's studies programs let's us all know how effective and efficient government bureaucracy actually operates.

And that's just the way it is.

CELEBRATING THE 150TH BIRTHDAY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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

Mr. McINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say happy birthday to the United States Department of Agriculture, which celebrated its 150th birthday on May 15.

In my home State of North Carolina, we have contributed to our Nation's agricultural success, and the Seventh Congressional district is the most productive agricultural district in the State, with over $2.5 billion worth of agricultural products sold each year.

Because our farms and our farmers and our agribusinesses are so critical to our State's economy, it is vital that the USDA partner with us, as it does with States throughout our country, helping farmers manage risk; providing a safety net for producers who experience disasters from weather, pests, or price collapse; giving rural communities the tools they need to be able to make infrastructure improvements; investing in cutting-edge agricultural research at our country's premiere research institutions and land grant universities. These all allow for breakthroughs in crop science and animal agriculture.

Indeed, we say happy birthday to our USDA. We know that the State of North Carolina, and all of our States that benefit from its services, allow our farmers and our rural communities in rural America to enjoy the strong positive relationship to share our future together. Let's keep our farmers and our rural communities strong.

NDAA PROTECTS TRICARE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today the House will debate the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013. The House Armed Services Committee approved this bipartisan bill last week by a vote of 56–5.

Earlier this year, the administration announced an increase in the TRICARE enrollment fees by up to 345 percent. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel, I am pleased the committee refused to authorize a provision to forward the administration's unfair proposal, which would destroy jobs.

Our brave men and women in uniform and their families have devoted their lives to defend our country. Their service to our Nation should be considered a prepayment of health care benefits and retirement.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and give our military families the fairness they deserve so they can work for peace through strength.

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

Welcome to Washington, Realtors and CPAs.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF DETECTIVE WALTER C. MEY, JR.

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

Mr. CICCILINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Detective Walter C. Mey, Jr., who works for the Middletown Police Department in the First Congressional District of Rhode Island.

Detective Mey recently received an honorable mention from the National Association of Police Organizations, which praised his work as part of their Top Cops award of 2012. Detective Mey was recognized for his efforts in apprehending a murder suspect last year.

The Top Cops award recognizes law enforcement officers who have been nominated by their peers for going above and beyond the call of duty. An 18-year veteran of the Middletown Police Department, Detective Mey has been awarded a Meritorious Service Medal from the Department. I congratulate Detective Mey today on his impressive achievements, and thank him for his continuing service on behalf of our community.

This week, as our Nation observes National Police Week, we are mindful that Detective Mey and every retired and every active duty Rhode Island police officer deserves our tremendous gratitude for their commitment to ensuring our safety.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all members of the gallery that they are guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of the proceedings is in violation of House rules.

□ 1210

RALPH CHESHIER

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

Mr. CRAWFORD. I rise today to honor Mr. Ralph Cheshier, a veteran teacher in the Valley View School District of Jonesboro, Arkansas.

For 37 years, Mr. Cheshier has taught his students the principles of agriculture. Mr. Cheshier is also a longtime member of the Partners in an Active Learning Setting, or PALS program. PALS is a mentoring program that matches high school students in the Vocational Agriculture Leadership Class with kindergarten students to develop personal skills and explore interests in plants and animals. The Valley View PALS chapter is one of only 10 in Arkansas.

Mr. Cheshier has a unique style of teaching through storytelling. He loves spending time with his students in the school greenhouse and shop, teaching them valuable skills and making his students become self-sufficient members of society. Mr. Cheshier will be remembered for his contributions to the academic and life development of his students. Many of the lessons he taught will go well beyond the classroom and will stick with those students forever.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent people like Mr. Cheshier, who make Arkansas a great place to live.

Happy retirement.

USPS REFORM

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, last week we learned that the Williams Street mail processing facility in my Buffalo community will remain open despite proposals by the Postal Service to close it.

While this is welcome news, I remain deeply disappointed by the ''decide first and justify later'' approach that the Postal Service has used throughout this process. From failing to notify residents of proposed closures to poor record-keeping at public meetings, the amount of community involvement in this process has been unacceptable, and now postal workers are faced with uncertainty as the status of their place of employment remains unclear.

Mr. Speaker, we must take advantage of this temporary moratorium on closures in order to take a serious look at the facility closure process and to make much-needed reforms.

OUR NATIONAL DEBT

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

Ms. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of receiving a letter from a constituent, a 14-year-old young man of Star Boy Scouts who is seeking to become a an Eagle Scout, and he is concerned about the Federal debt and deficit.

Christopher Woloshyn wrote to me:

> I think that the Federal deficit is too high and overwhelming for Americans, and will affect people like me even more in the future . . . I believe our government must stop spending more money than it takes in. Can you please help our government reduce our national deficit so myself and fellow young Americans will not be burdened by our national debt?

Christopher, I could not agree more with you, and you have the wisdom of someone who can look at this issue with fresh eyes.

We here in the House of Representatives, under the leadership of Speaker BOEHNER, are dedicated to making sure that we do not add to that debt, which

is what we are concentrating on this year. That is why I am so proud to support the Speaker in the Boehner principle: that we will not raise the debt ceiling without at least dollar-for-dollar compensatory cuts.

Christopher, you deserve a better future. We are determined to provide that to you, and I urge our fellow Members of the House to follow the same.

VAWA—WOMEN'S HEALTH WEDNESDAY

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Since 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has strengthened communities and provided critical, lifesaving support to victims of violence.

VAWA reauthorization must continue the fight to protect all victims and their families from the fear of violence, including those victims who are immigrants, Native Americans, members of the LGBT community, and college students. Unfortunately, for the first time in VAWA's history, we will not have a bipartisan reauthorization bill. Even worse, H.R. 4970 is a step backward and is opposed by hundreds of anti-violence groups.

While there are many problems with the bill, I am most distressed by the provisions regarding battered immigrant women. H.R. 4970 destroys years of work of protecting immigrant women. It creates more obstacles for these victims to report crimes, and it limits U visa protections and adds restrictive certification requirements that will only discourage cooperation with law enforcement agencies, which themselves oppose these provisions.

Victim safety is a core principle of VAWA. We must remain firm in our commitment to ensure that all victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and trafficking have meaningful access to protection under the law.

HOUSE GOP PLAN FOR AMERICA'S JOB CREATORS

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

Ms. FOXX. Fostering job growth for the American people continues to be the number one job for House Republicans. With unemployment above 8 percent for the past 39 months, the Obama economy continues to produce the Nation's worst jobless record since the Great Depression.

By following the House Republican Plan for America's Job Creators, the House has passed more than 30 bipartisan jobs bills on behalf of the American people. Each of these bills is aimed at unleashing the power of our private sector to freely and confidently build, invest, innovate, and expand again—and put millions of Americans back to work. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these bipartisan House-passed jobs bills are being blocked or ignored in the Democrat-controlled Senate.

The American people are tired of waiting. It is time for Democrats in the Senate and White House to put politics aside and to support the House Republican Plan for America's Job Creators.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

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

Mr. COSTA. Today, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4970, the partisan reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Since 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has been a critical tool for protecting women and children who are victims of domestic abuse, and Congress has twice made necessary bipartisan improvements in the law.

As a cochairman of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, I know that we have learned a great deal from law enforcement and victim advocate groups since we last reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act in 2005. Unfortunately, this bill rolls back comprehensive protections for all vulnerable populations rather than reflect on the lessons we've learned.

We should be listening to the victims' rights advocate groups and our local law enforcement agencies, which know and deal daily with the impacts on people's lives who are the victims of crime. Therefore, we ought to pass the bipartisan Senate reauthorization bill and end this partisan charade.

EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO H.R. 4970—VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, which shifts the power into the hands of the abuser and moves away from longstanding bipartisanship on this issue.

In my view, a vote for H.R. 4970 is clearly an attack on the Violence Against Women Act, and I am deeply concerned that the manager's amendment to H.R. 4970 weakens current law and rolls back protections in the VAWA self-petition process, empowering abusers and harming battered immigrant spouses.

The manager's amendment rolls back U visa protections, denying protection to immigrant victims of serious crime and stripping police and prosecutors of a critical law enforcement tool. The manager's amendment fails to include provisions from the bipartisan Senate-passed bill to protect Native American women and includes language that may lead to further abuse. The manager's amendment fails, again, to include provisions of the bipartisan Senate-passed bill to protect LGBT victims from discrimination, and it weakens nondiscrimination employment protections.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote against H.R. 4970 and to work together in a bipartisan manner in order to improve and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

STUDENT DEBT

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

Mr. WELCH. In 45 days, the interest rates on some Stafford student loans are going to double. Even though we have a consensus in Congress that low interest rates should be extended, we can't get the job done. Families can't wait. They're sitting around, trying to figure out how they'll put their kids through college.

Take Beth from Westfield, Vermont. She told her children when they were young that college was part of their futures and important if they were going to make it into the middle class. Now she fears she may have steered them wrong. Her family currently holds $150,000 in debt. In a tough job market, Beth's kids are struggling to get a foothold in life with loan repayment costs exceeding $500 a month. Beth would like to help, but she is not really in a strong position to do so. She went back to college later in life, hoping to advance her career, and now she is way down, as are her kids, with this enormous burden.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has 45 days. Congress needs to act. We can't afford to price the middle class out of a college education.

□ 1220

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, the Violence Against Women Act has saved lives, reducing domestic violence by half. Our colleagues in the Senate have embraced this fact and passed a bipartisan reauthorization bill that makes sense. Unfortunately, I can't say the same thing about H.R. 4970.

My Republican friends have good intentions. I believe they want to protect victims of domestic violence just as much as I do, but to be effective, however, our legislation has to address the problems as they exist. H.R. 4970 does not. The bill makes reporting abuse more difficult, forces shelters and counselors to spend more of their precious resources on unnecessary paperwork, and fails to extend protection to the LGBT Americans. One of the most striking deficiencies is its failure to protect immigrant victims of abuse.

Because of their status, immigrants are often scared to report crimes of violence. This fear results in more damage to their communities as the violence escalates. But law enforcement has the powerful tool to combat these crimes—the U visa program, which protects immigrants if they report abuse.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT REAUTHORIZATION

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, during my first term in Congress, I proudly voted for the Violence Against Women Act. It saddens me that 20 years later, in my last term, my Republican colleagues are determined to water down and undermine this landmark legislation. Of all things that shouldn't be partisan, this is it—the need to help those who suffer injuries at the hands of someone who supposedly loves them.

As we've seen many times, the majority seems to like playing politics with women's health and safety. And because they rarely miss an opportunity to exclude LGBT Americans from important rights and benefits, they're saying that if you're a woman who is in a relationship with another woman, then you don't deserve the same protection against domestic abuse or sexual assault.

We need to be doing more, not less on this issue. I have a bill that would extend family-leave benefits to victims of domestic violence. It's H.R. 3151. Why don't we take up that bill instead of this divisive measure that rolls back historic progress?

Vote ''no'' on H.R. 4970.

VOTE ''NO'' ON H.R. 4970, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, this misguided GOP reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Unfortunately, this bill does not do enough to protect the well-being of all women. I say again that it does not do enough to protect the well-being of all women.

This reauthorization jeopardizes the safety of our Native American women and also the safety of many undocumented women. Neither the manager's amendment nor the underlying bill addresses the problems that face Indian country. Instead of empowering tribal police and courts to stop domestic violence, this legislation unfairly places the burden on Native victims. Many of the victims of domestic violence that live on the reservations are unable to hire legal counsel and can't travel hundreds of miles to Federal courts to petition for protection orders.

We must protect sovereignty. We must respect sovereignty. Tribal courts are the best authorities to issue domestic violence orders of protection on reservations.

Let's stop this partisan bill. Let's work together on a new approach that values the safety of Native Americans and undocumented individuals in a bipartisan fashion.

WE STILL HAVE WORK TO DO

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, it's truly unfortunate that we're here today talking about the possibility of voting against the Violence Against Women Act. This bill was originally passed and has been consistently reauthorized with strong bipartisan support, but it now faces unnecessary hurdles.

There has been a drop in annual rates of domestic violence since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act, but we still have work to do. Alarmingly, one in four women and one in seven men have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime, but the current bill is not the way to move forward.

Unlike the companion bill that passed in the Senate with strong bipartisan support, this House bill will take us backwards. It eliminates protections for immigrants dependent on and exploited by their spouses, keeping them trapped in violent relationships. It could let perpetrators of sexual violence against Native American women off the hook, and it utterly fails to recognize that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, including those in same-sex relationships.

Every time we reauthorize an act of Congress, we have an opportunity to improve. Improvement, not further harming victims, should be our focus with the reauthorization.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT

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

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4970, the so-called Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. I believe that all Americans are entitled to feel safe, and we must strengthen current laws to continue to protect women and children across our country. This bill, however, does not achieve that goal. Immigrants, native tribes, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender groups are some of our most vulnerable communities, and the bill rolls back years of progress improving Federal efforts against domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

The bill eliminates important confidentiality protections for self-petitions and would put immigrant women at greater risk for repeat abuses by undermining the intent of U visas. This bill discourages crime victims from cooperating with law enforcement and eliminates any attempt at a stable life by terminating their eligibility for permanent residence.

Women in this country, regardless of their background, should never have to feel trapped or helpless.

A SHAMEFUL BILL

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I never could have anticipated speaking in opposition to the Violence Against Women Act, and it's unfortunate that we've come to this point, but here we are. This comes after more than a year of bipartisan efforts to put together a comprehensive, effective, and much-needed VAWA draft. But Republicans in the Senate and then in the House decided to ignore the recommendations of the FBI, the Department of Justice, and advocacy groups on the ground and push a version of VAWA that endangers immigrant women and children, ignores the needs of our native communities, and perpetuates discrimination against LGBT victims. That is why hundreds of victim services organizations oppose this bill, and I stand with them today.

At the Women in Distress shelter in my district, there has been a 39 percent increase in requests for services over the last year. Women need us now more than ever, and this is not the time to allow for discrimination or helping only some victims of domestic violence. This is the time to take a stand.

As lawmakers, we speak for the voiceless, and today I speak united with my colleagues in opposition to this shameful bill.

I STAND WITH VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, today I stand with my Democratic colleagues and victims of domestic violence across our Nation in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the House Republican alternative to the Violence Against Women Reauthorization bill. This bill severely undermines vital protections available to victims of violence and places those victims in danger of continued abuse.

Since its enactment in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act, known as VAWA, has a long history of uniting lawmakers with the common purpose of protecting survivors of domestic violence.

Each year across the Nation, thousands of women, children, and men who fall victim to domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking no longer

have to live in fear because of important victim protections under this law.

This Republican alternative bill threatens to dismantle this progress by deliberately placing domestic violence victims from LGBT, immigrant, tribal, and other marginalized communities in harm's way.

□ 1230

REPUBLICAN BILL ENDANGERS WOMEN

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

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I rise today to oppose H.R. 4970. Under current law, a woman who is married to a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident and is a victim of spousal abuse can file a self-petition for legal permanent residency in order to leave that abusive relationship.

This provision has helped women like Maria, whose husband physically abused her and threatened to kill her two children. Without his knowledge, she started a VAWA self-petition process, meeting with an attorney at the laundromat on her usual laundry day and hiding her paperwork.

What this bill does is exposes women like Maria. It strips confidentiality protections and allows government officials to contact the spouse. Why would we do that? For these women, tipping off abusive spouses is nothing short of putting them in harm's way. It's a shame.

It's a shame that this so-called Violence Against Women bill could actually cause violence to women. Mr. Speaker, this bill is outright dangerous, and I urge my colleagues to say ''no.''

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4970, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4310, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 656 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. Res. 656

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4970) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. At any time after the 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. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, 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 Armed Services. After general debate, the Committee of the Whole shall rise without motion. No further consideration of the bill shall be in order except pursuant to a subsequent order of the House.

POINT OF ORDER

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order against H. Res. 656 because the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act. The resolution contains a waiver of all points of order against consideration of the bill, which includes a waiver of section 425 of the Congressional Budget Act, which causes a violation of section 426(a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Wisconsin makes a point of order that the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The gentlewoman has met the threshold burden under the rule, and the gentlewoman from Wisconsin and a Member opposed each will control 10 minutes of debate on the question of consideration.

Following debate, the Chair will put the question of consideration as the statutory means of disposing of the point of order.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I raise this point of order not necessarily out of concern for unfunded mandates, although there are some unfunded mandates in the underlying bill, H.R. 4970; rather, I am here today because this is the only opportunity to voice opposition to this bill, given the strict, closed terms of our debate today.

It is baffling to me, Mr. Speaker, that we would be so shut out of today's debate and that House Republicans would so completely abandon any pretense of bipartisanship on a bill like the Violence Against Women Act. This bill has always been a bipartisan effort, and I would argue that on an issue like this, it is incredibly important to have a well-rounded discussion.

We obviously disagree about the key elements that are critical to include in a Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. Well, why not allow us to have a healthy debate? More importantly, Mr. Speaker, why not allow us our chance to try to improve the legislation before us?

Our allies in the domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy community have literally spent years compiling input and data from service providers, law enforcement, and victims themselves about what we must do to update VAWA in a reauthorization. And I am here to be a voice of protest because their input is invaluable; yet, for the very first time, their input has been cast aside.

Last night I offered a substitute, along with Representative CONYERS and Representative LOFGREN, that would have allowed us to consider the Senate-passed version of the Violence Against Women Act, a version which I proudly introduced in March here in this House of Representatives. This legislation was passed in the Senate with sound bipartisan support and includes the improvements that have been endorsed by a broad array of individuals and organizations, including law enforcement agencies.

But, unfortunately, today we will not be allowed to vote on the Senate bill. We will have to vote on the Adams bill, which is now officially opposed by over 325 organizations. Yes, Mr. Speaker, you heard it right—325 organizations.

I would like to share my time with my colleagues who are here with me today and would like for their voices to be heard. So, Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I am going to yield to a number of Members for unanimous consent, the first of whom is Ms. YVETTE CLARKE from Brooklyn, New York.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to submit my remarks in opposition to a Republican bill that weakens protections for violence against women and in support of the bipartisan Senate bill.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in vehement opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012 (VAWA). This egregious bill is another example of this Republican-led Congress waging political warfare on women.

H.R. 4970 would roll back years of progress and bipartisan commitment on the part of Congress to protect vulnerable immigrant victims of domestic violence, stalking, sex crimes, other serious crimes, and trafficking. Choosing one type of victim over the other.

Mr. Speaker, this will greatly impact areas with heavy concentrations of immigrants, which includes my district and other residents of New York City. Historically, NYC has been the beacon of immigration. Many in Congress, including Republicans, can trace their ancestry back to the immigrant population of NYC.

These new punitive measures within H.R. 4970 that hinder abused immigrants' ability to seek justice against their abusers, are a grave set of circumstances that will have future implications on the safety and security of our country.

It will jeopardize community relations with law enforcement, force those on a pathway to permanent residency or citizenship into the shadows, and threaten the moral fabric that binds civil society.

As the majority continues to pride itself as being the defenders of small government, fiscal responsibility, and moral authority, I am appalled at how almost every action taken in this 112th Congress has been to the contrary of their platform.

Mr. Speaker, I feel like I'm in that movie Groundhog Day, every day it is the same attacks over and over again. Are we running out of options? Are we so scared of tackling the real issues in this country like job creation, that we will continue to debate the same egregious legislative measures that curtail the rights and freedoms of women and cut off access to it for immigrants?

Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense that a nation of immigrants, built on the backs of immigrants, would not provide protection to immigrants.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would advise Members to confine their unanimous-consent requests to a simple, declarative statement of the Member's attitude toward the measure. Further embellishments will result in a deduction of time from the yielding Member.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Ms. MOORE. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will state her inquiry.

Ms. MOORE. The declarative statement that you referred to, am I not correct, Mr. Speaker, that that could also include a sentence, a complete sentence?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will only deduct time for embellishments.

Ms. MOORE. I thank the Chair.

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to submit my remarks in opposition to a Republican bill that weakens protections for violence against women and in support of the bipartisan Senate bill that actually protects victims.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, today the House will consider a bill entitled the ''Violence Against Women Act.'' This bill, however, does very little to stop violence or protect women.

Instead of continuing the tradition of coming together in a bi-partisan manner to pass this important reauthorization and achieve something we all should be able to agree on, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have turned the Violence Against Women Act into a partisan messaging platform.

VAWA should protect every victim from their abuser, regardless of their immigration status. Instead, this bill endangers immigrants by punishing victims who cooperate with law enforcement.

VAWA should protect every victim, regardless of their sexual orientation or the gender of their abuser. Instead, this bill endangers LGBTQ victims by including ''gender-neutral'' language that ignores the reality that people are being underserved because of their sexual orientation.

VAWA should protect every victim, regardless of their Tribal affiliation. Instead, this bill endangers Native victims who are abused by non-Native Americans and leaves tribal courts without proper authority to protect victims and create safe communities.

Because the so-called ''Violence Against Women Act'' does none of these things, I stand in firm opposition to this bill.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to submit my remarks in opposition to a Republican bill that weakens protections for violence against women and in support of the bipartisan Senate bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I am disappointed by the direction the House Majority has taken with this version of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

VAWA is a landmark piece of legislation that has dramatically reduced violence against women and provided states and local communities with additional resources to address crimes against women.

As such, VAWA reauthorization has in past Congresses gained overwhelming bipartisan support. No matter what side of the aisle we're on, members of Congress have long understood the need to strengthen protections for victims of abuse. Just last month, the Senate passed its own version of VAWA, which garnered a bipartisan vote of 68–31.

And yet here we are today debating a partisan bill that weakens critical protections and fails to protect underserved communities like LGBT victims and Native American women.

A diverse coalition of 164 immigration, faith, labor, civil rights, human rights, and community groups have come together in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, even with the manager's amendments. Their message is clear: H.R. 4970 will set us back years in fighting domestic violence.

At a time when we need to modernize the VAWA to build upon our efforts, this bill would instead roll back existing protections.

This bill would make it much harder for battered immigrant women to leave their abusive relationship by adding unnecessary layers of bureaucracy.

Strong immigrant victim protections have helped countless women, including Maria, who's husband physically abused her and threatened to kill her two children. Without his knowledge, she started a VAWA self-petition process, meeting with an attorney at the Laundromat on her usual laundry day and hiding her paperwork. Repealing immigrant protections and adding red-tape and onerous requirements will endanger the safety of battered immigrants like Maria.

H.R. 4970 would also weaken the U visa program, which has encouraged immigrant victims of crime to report and help prosecute serious criminal activity.

Current law allows U visa recipients to apply to become permanent residents. This bill removes the opportunity of most victims to apply to become permanent residents, thereby discouraging victims from cooperating with local law enforcement as it could lead to deportation.

Strong protections in this area have helped countless immigrant women escape the cycle of domestic abuse and rebuild their lives.

Now, we should have a conversation about how to update VAWA so that MORE women can be served.

We've learned in the past years that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims experience domestic violence at the same rate as the general population. Yet, they do not receive the same protections and services they need because of discrimination and lack of training by law enforcement and service providers.

The Senate bill includes important provisions that ensure that services to LGBT victims are explicitly included in VAWA grant problems, as well as bans discrimination against victims based on their sexual orientation.

We have to ask the question as to why these key measures were not included in this regressive bill brought by the House majority.

As a mother and a grandmother, I can not stand by as we roll back decades of progress in protecting women from emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

It is time that we stop playing politics, reject this partisan proposal, and move forward with a bipartisan bill that ensures that all victims of violence are protected.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to submit my remarks in opposition to a Republican bill that weakens protections for violence against women and in support of the bipartisan Senate bill.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to submit my remarks in opposition to a bill that weakens protections for violence against women and in support of the bipartisan Senate bill.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, when the Violence Against Women Act was first passed, it was to prevent and raise awareness of domestic violence, and to create programs that help victims exit dangerous situations. Unfortunately, the bill we are debating today runs counter to these goals. It eliminates critical protections to help immigrant

women and it fails to extend the protections of VAWA to other populations that need them desperately. I support the Senate's bipartisan VAWA reauthorization bill, which builds on past progress by providing battered Native American women with recourse against their abusers and ensures that anyone who experiences domestic abuse has access to VAWA resources, including those in same-sex relationships. I urge my colleagues to oppose H.R. 4970 and ensure that the reauthorization of VAWA helps all victims of domestic abuse.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to submit my remarks in opposition to the Republican bill that weakens protections for violence against women and in support of the bipartisan Senate bill.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. WATERS. Today, I stand with my Democratic colleagues and victims of domestic violence across our Nation in strong opposition to the H.R. 4970, the House Republican alternative to Violence Against Women Reauthorization bill. This bill severely undermines vital protections available to victims of violence and places these victims in danger of continued abuse.

Since its enactment in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) has a long history of uniting lawmakers with the common purpose of protecting survivors of domestic violence. Each year across this Nation, thousands of women, children, and men who fall victim to domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking no longer have to live in fear because of important victim protections under this law. This Republican alternative bill threatens to dismantle this progress by deliberately placing domestic violence victims from LGBT, immigrant, tribal and other marginalized communities in harm's way.

While my Republican colleagues may think many of these discarded provisions are unnecessary, there is ample proof that they are sadly mistaken. Just last year, cases of LGBT domestic violence had increased by 38 percent. Of those who sought help, 44 percent of LGBT victims were turned away from traditional shelters. As for Tribal victims, Native American women face the highest rate of domestic violence in the U.S.—three and a half times higher than the national average. Proposed changes to current VAWA protections for immigrant survivors create an even larger obstacle for immigrant victims seeking to report crimes and increase the danger to immigrant victims by eliminating important confidentiality protections. These changes threaten to undermine current anti-fraud protections in place while rolling back decades of Congress's progress and commitments towards the protection of vulnerable immigrant victims.

Let's be clear, VAWA should not be used as a vehicle to pass immigration policy measures that are not germane to its purpose. VAWA has always been focused on protecting victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and trafficking and this should not change. In just one day, over 5,363 victims and their children receive services at domestic violence programs in California. On that same day, however, over 924 requests for services go unmet, largely due to lack of resources. This alone is proof that we need to expand the VAWA's programs and services and not eliminate them.

□ 1240

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I join the United States Conference of Mayors and the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination in opposition to the bill, and I ask unanimous consent to submit their letters for the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

THE UNITED STATES
CONFERENCE OF MAYORS,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2012.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Office of the Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Office of the Democratic Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: On behalf of the nation's mayors, we strongly urge the House of Representatives to support the protections for victims of domestic violence included in S. 1925, the bipartisan Senate bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

Since 1994, this landmark law has provided a comprehensive, coordinated, and community-based approach toward reducing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other forms of violence. VAWA's programs and services have provided lifesaving assistance to hundreds of thousands of victims and significantly strengthened the ability of the criminal justice system to hold violent perpetrators accountable. Over the past two decades, these efforts have helped dramatically reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women, including an over 50 percent decline in the annual rate of domestic violence.

Despite considerable progress in addressing the epidemic of violence against women, we recognize that much more needs to be done and that this reauthorization presents an opportunity for the Congress to strengthen our national commitment to tackling the challenges that remain. Like the 2000 and 2005 reauthorizations, we believe that the bipartisan Senate reauthorization does just that by expanding services and assistance to those communities who experience the highest rates of violence or who have the greatest difficulty accessing services.

We believe that it is essential that VAWA's vital services be provided to all victims regardless of group status and for that reason we strongly support the establishment of a uniform nondiscrimination provision for VAWA grant programs included in S. 1925. By replacing and clarifying the current patchwork of protections, the nondiscrimination provision will help ensure that victims are not denied services on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability. This measure is needed in part to address the significant obstacles that lesbian, gay, and transgendered communities have faced in accessing services in recent years. Despite the fact that they experience domestic violence at the same rate as the general population, 45 percent of lesbian, gay, and transgendered victims are reportedly turned away when they seek help from domestic violence shelters. This type of discrimination is simply unacceptable.

Since its first passage, VAWA has sought to protect immigrant victims whose non-citizen status can make them especially vulnerable to crimes of domestic and sexual violence. We are greatly concerned by a provision included in the VAWA reauthorization proposed by the House of Representatives, H.R. 4970, which would roll back confidentiality protections that enable undocumented women to safely come forward and report violent crimes. Rather than reducing the outlets for these victims, VAWA reauthorization should provide additional ways for law enforcement to work with these victims to investigate and prosecute serious crimes. The Senate version includes a provision that would allow the Department of Homeland Security to draw from a pool of previously authorized but never used U visas so that law enforcement officers have the tools to work with victims and bring violent offenders to justice.

The House bill, unlike the Senate version, also does not address the continuing challenge of violence in tribal communities. A recent study by the Center for Disease Control found that 46 percent of Native American women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. As with immigrant victims, VAWA has aimed to address the terribly high rates of violence against women in tribal communities. Although some progress has been made, we believe the continuing high rates of violence on tribal lands require far greater attention. This reauthorization provides an opportunity to strengthen federal law enforcement tools and to expand the capacity of tribal governments to investigate and prosecute these crimes.

As mayors, we have seen the tremendous impact of the Violence Against Women Act in our communities. The lifesaving programs supported in the legislation should be quickly reauthorized to ensure the continuation and access of vital services for victims. We believe that these Senate provisions will help us better address continuing problems and remaining unmet needs, and strongly urge the House take up and pass the bipartisan Senate bill, S. 1925.

Sincerely,

Antonio R. Villaragosa, Mayor of Los Angeles, CA President; Annise D. Parker, Mayor of Houston, TX Chair, Criminal & Social Justice Committee; Mark Stodola, Mayor of Little Rock, AR; Wayne Powell, Mayor of Manhattan Beach, CA; Jerry Sanders, Mayor of San Diego, CA; Helene Schneider, Mayor of Santa Barbara, CA; Bill Finch, Mayor of Bridgeport, CT; James Baker, Mayor of Wilmington, DE.

Michael A. Nutter, Mayor of Philadelphia, PA, Vice President; Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of Boston, MA, Past President; Patrick Hays, Mayor of North Little Rock, AR; Mary Ann Lutz, Mayor of Monrovia, CA; Ed Lee, Mayor of San Francisco, CA; Christopher Cabaldon, Mayor of West Sacramento, CA; Pedro Segarra, Mayor of Hartford, CT; Susan Whelchel, Mayor of Boca Raton, FL.

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor of New York, NY; Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director; Greg Stanton, Mayor of Phoenix, AZ; Kevin Johnson, Mayor of Sacramento, CA; Jan Marx, Mayor of San Luis Obispo, CA; Michael Hancock, Mayor of Denver, CO; Vincent C. Gray, Mayor of Washington, DC; Marilyn Gerber, Mayor of Coconut Creek, FL.

Patricia Gerard, Mayor of Largo, FL, Michael Ryan, Mayor of Sunrise, FL, Judy Abruscato, Mayor of Wheeling, IL, Harvey Johnson, Jr., Mayor of Jackson, MS; William Bell, Mayor of Durham, NC; Ken Miyagishima, Mayor of Las Cruces, NM; William Moehle, Mayor of Brighton, NY.

Michael Coleman, Mayor of Columbus, OH; Vaughn Spencer, Mayor of Reading, PA; Angel Taveras, Mayor of Providence, RI; Raul Salinas, Mayor of Laredo, TX; Michael McGinn, Mayor Seattle, WA; Dan Devine, Mayor of West Allis, WI; Lori Mosely, Mayor of Miramar, FL.

Shawn Connors, Pecatonica, IL; Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor of Baltimore, MD; John Engen, Mayor of Missoula, MT; Antonia Ricigliano, Mayor of Edison, NJ; Gerald Jennings, Mayor of Albany, NY; Paul Dyster, Mayor of Niagara Falls, NY; Sam Adams, Mayor of Portland, OR.

Thomas Leighton, Mayor of Wilkes-Barre, PA; Stephen Wukela, Mayor of Florence, SC; Deloris Prince, Mayor of Port Arthur, TX; Tom Barrett, Mayor of Milwaukee, WI; André Pierre, Mayor of North Miami, FL; Robert Sanonjian, Mayor of Waukegan, IL; William Wild, Mayor of Westland, MI; Anthony Foxx, Mayor of Charlotte, NC.

Susan Cohen, Mayor of Manalapan, NJ; Matthew Ryan, Mayor of Binghamton, NY; Stephanie Miner, Mayor of Syracuse, NY; Ed Pawlowski, Mayor of Allentown, PA; Victor Ortiz, Mayor of Gurabo, PR; AC Wharton, Mayor of Memphis, TN; John Marchione, Mayor of Redmond, WA; John Dickert, Mayor of Racine, WI.

THE COALITION AGAINST RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION,

Washington, DC, May 16, 2012.

Re Vote No on the Adams Amendment (#1). Reject Federally Funded Employment Discrimination.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The undersigned religious, education, civil rights, labor, and women's organizations write to voice our opposition to the language of the Adams Amendment (Amendment #1) to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012. We oppose the Adams Amendment insofar as it would alter the nondiscrimination clause in the base bill to remove protections that bar federally funded religious discrimination. We urge you to Vote NO on the Adams Amendment, as government funds should not be used to underwrite employment discrimination within government-funded projects and activities.

We appreciate the important role religiously affiliated institutions historically have played in addressing many of our nation's most pressing social needs, as a complement to government-funded programs. Indeed, many of us are directly involved in this work. We also recognize that the separation of church and state is the linchpin of religious freedom. In our view, effective government collaboration with faith-based groups does not require the sanctioning of federally funded religious discrimination.

In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, religious organizations may prefer co-religionists in hiring when using their own private funds. The Adams Amendment, however, would permit religious organizations to take VAWA funds and use those funds to discriminate against a qualified individual based on nothing more than his or her religious beliefs. VAWA should protect against taxpayer dollars being used to underwrite jobs where religion is a factor in hiring decisions.

Adopting the language in the Adams Amendment would be inconsistent with the longstanding principle that federal dollars must not be used to discriminate. Accordingly, we urge you to vote No.

Sincerely,

African American Ministers in Action, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), American Association of University Women (AAUW), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), American Humanist Association, American Jewish Committee, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Anti-Defamation League, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.

Catholics for Choice, Center for Inquiry, Council for Secular Humanism, Disciples Justice Action Network, Equal Partners in Faith, Family Equality Council, Feminist Majority, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, Hindu American Foundation, Human Rights Campaign.

Institute for Science and Human Values, Interfaith Alliance, Japanese American Citizens League, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, Jewish Women International, Lambda Legal, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Legal Momentum NAACP.

National Center for Lesbian Rights, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, National Council of Jewish Women, National Education Association, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund, National Partnership for Women & Families, National Organization for Women, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) National People For the American Way.

Secular Coalition for America, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS), The Sikh Coalition, Transgender Law Center, Union for Reform Judaism, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries, United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society, Women of Reform Judaism.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to submit my remarks in opposition to a Republican bill that weakens protections for violence against women and in support of the bipartisan Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to submit my remarks in opposition to a Republican bill that weakens protections for violence against women and in support of the bipartisan Senate bill.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H. Res. 656, Rule Providing Consideration of H.R. 4970, Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. Reporting a closed rule for the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act is another example of shutting Democrats out of the legislation process by ruling out any opportunity for Democrats to offer much needed Amendments.

The House version of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act unfortunately omits improvements contained in the Senate version of the bill. What is worse is that the House version in its current form removes existing protections for immigrant women, and puts them at greater risk of domestic and sexual abuse, and it does not provide adequate and equal protection for tribal women and the LGBT community.

For nearly two decades now, Democrats have firmly supported the Violence Against Women Act and the critical assistance it has provided for women, men, and children, and have worked with Republicans to ensure its reauthorization twice in the past. Unfortunately, since Republicans have taken over the House, bipartisanship and compromise have fallen out of fashion. Republicans have continually played partisan politics and refused to compromise in an effort to move this country forward, and here we are again with another clear example of that.

Reporting a closed rule for consideration of Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act is a full-fledged promotion of the Republican attack against women and approval of legislation that is intended to silence the cries of millions of women around our country.

Violence Against Women Act has never been and should never be a partisan issue. It is astonishing how the Republican majority has lost sight of our purpose as lawmakers. We have been trusted with the responsibility of protecting society and ensuring justice to victims. Democrats and Republicans have always worked together to reauthorize Violence Against Women Act since its original passage in 1994. But that is not the case today.

This rule completely shuts out Democrats and does not allow for the possibility of a bipartisan consensus. I cannot support a rule making in order a bill that strips immigrant women, tribal women and the LGBT community of vital protections as this bill does.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to stand with me in opposition to this rule.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ladies who are submitting their statements for the RECORD.

The Members who join me today are just a few of the many people who would like to be here to offer their suggestions for improving the bill and to highlight the stories of women, men, and children in their district and communities who have experienced atrocious violence. There are lessons to be learned from their stories, and it is unwise and unkind of us to turn a blind eye.

I'm thinking of Rosalind in Milwaukee, who was killed by her girlfriend, Malika, and her family had concerns about her over-possessiveness. But, of course, this is an LGBT relationship, and an order for protection may have been ignored without these provisions.

I think of another person in my district, Diane's story, 26 years old, married to a non-Indian, beaten. Over a hundred incidences—slapped, kicked, punched, and living in terror. She called for help several times but no one ever came to her rescue. She was living on a tribal land.

The Violence Against Women Act has been a lifeline for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. It has allowed us to hold perpetrators accountable and to pave pathways out of violence for victims—all women. And since VAWA passed in 1994, domestic violence has dropped by more than half. We must not turn back, Mr. Speaker. We must not weaken or repeal some of VAWA's lifesaving protections.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 5 minutes remaining.

Ms. MOORE. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to claim time in opposition to the point of

order and in favor of consideration of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from North Carolina is recognized for 10 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. The question before the House is: Should the House now consider H. Res. 656? Section 4 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, or UMRA, excludes from the application of that act any legislative provision that establishes or enforces statutory rights prohibiting discrimination.

The Congressional Budget Office has stated that while they have not reviewed a provision in section 3 of H.R. 4970 for intergovernmental or private-sector mandates, since that provision prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability, other provisions of H.R. 4970 would impose no intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA.

CBO goes on to say the bill would impose private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA on brokers of international marriage and certain supervisors over persons under official control of the United States. However, CBO estimates that the cost of those mandates would fall well below the annual threshold established in UMRA: $146 million in 2012, adjusted annually for inflation.

Mr. Speaker, the motion of the gentlewoman is dilatory. In order to allow the House to continue its scheduled business for the day, I urge Members to vote ''yes'' on the question of consideration of the resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I do appreciate the woman walking us through the protocols for the unfunded mandates. And I would submit to her that the National Network to End Domestic Violence, who does a point-in-time counting of domestic violence services nationwide, would indicate that it costs not only personal anguish, but there are costs in society, actual fiscal costs, to not protecting women who are suffering in violent situations.

Right in my own State of Wisconsin, 714,000 women have been assaulted, raped, or stalked by an intimate partner. This number actually exceeds the population of the entire city of Milwaukee. Imagine the cost to employers when people don't show up at work. Imagine the cost in emergency rooms when people show up battered and bruised and broken and have no health insurance.

Approximately half a million of these women were fearful or concerned for their safety. Two hundred and eighty thousand Wisconsin women, 12.7 percent of our population, have been stalked in their lifetime. Imagine the cost of additional police work when these women call the police and nothing has been done in terms of making arrests and asking for accountability.

A study of childhood exposure to violence in Milwaukee has found that 16 percent of Wisconsin adults report having experienced recurring violence between adults in their childhood. Imagine the loss of productivity at schools. There's often a lot of talk about kids being inattentive in school and not being able to pass and succeed in school. Next to hunger, imagine the cost of witnessing and experiencing violence in the home as a cost to society.

I would now like to yield to the gentlelady for a question.

There were several amendments that were introduced in the Rules Committee last evening, and I was wondering if you were aware of any amendments that were adopted after we left the Rules Committee last evening. I know there had been a hearing. I was wondering if any of the amendments that Democrats had introduced were adopted.

Ms. FOXX. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

None of the amendments were made in order except the manager's amendment, which brings the bill closer to the Senate version of the bill.

Ms. MOORE. The manager's amendment, thankfully, was adopted, because the manager's amendment did have one little piece in there that helps out immigrant women. But there are 325 groups and organizations, everything from national women organizations to evangelical women and the bishops, that oppose even the manager's amendment because they say that not only are there just simply rollbacks to the Violence Against Women Act, but it actually puts immigrant women in danger, as the balance is tipped from current law in favor of these batterers, sexual assaulters, abusers, and killers.

I would like to yield to the gentlelady for one more question.

Will this body ever have an opportunity to vote on the bipartisan bill from the Senate that passed 68–31? Will this body ever have the opportunity? Will that bill ever be before us?

□ 1250

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I cannot assume what this body will do in the future. I am one member of the Rules Committee and the Education Committee. I do not have control over that, and I don't believe anybody can predict the future.

Ms. MOORE. Representative FOXX, just a follow-up, you are a member, a very senior member, of the Rules Committee, and so I was wondering if the rule is structured in a way that will ever allow to have before us, after we vote on this version, the Adams version of the VAWA bill? Will there be a pathway toward voting on the Senate bill as you understand it?

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I believe the gentlewoman's question is a question for the rule and is not relevant to the point of order which she has raised.

Ms. MOORE. I thank the Speaker and I thank the gentlelady.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it really pains me to see my colleagues across the aisle make the kind of accusations that they make about Republicans being unconcerned about the issue of violence against women. How could they possibly accuse us of not being concerned about that issue? All Republicans are concerned about violence against anyone. Violence, we are very concerned about that. I personally won't even watch any kind of movie that has any kind of violence in it because I can't stand to see violence perpetrated on another human being. So Republican men and women both abhor violence against women.

But what we have done in the legislation that we are proposing is we are asking for increased accountability and to see that more services are directly offered to women who have violence perpetrated against them. In fact, I would say that we are more concerned about violence for women because we want to see those women served better and we want to see the money spent better.

Mr. Speaker, helping victims of abuse and domestic violence is not a Republican or Democrat issue. I have been pleased to work with Congresswoman LORETTA SANCHEZ on H.R. 196, Simplifying the Ambiguous Law Keeping Everyone Reliably Safe, or STALKERS, Act which she has championed for the last two Congresses. The Democrats wouldn't bring this bill up when they were in control of the House.

The STALKERS Act updates the Federal stalking statute to include electronic surveillance and other means of cyber-stalking to ensure that potential stalking victims are protected as technology changes. In addition, the STALKERS Act increases criminal penalties by 5 years for offenders who have violated a protective order or whose victims are under the age of 18 or elderly.

Congresswoman SANCHEZ and I worked together regardless of which party was in charge of the House, and I'm pleased that legislation with the original cosponsor, who's a Democrat, has been included in the VAWA reauthorization bill that the House will vote on today. The VAWA reauthorization bill also adds stalking as an allowable grant purpose to continue the work of protecting these victims.

As we all know, law enforcement and prosecutors must have the resources they need to pursue violent criminals, and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in voting for H.R. 4970 after voting for this rule providing for its consideration, or the rule we will consider in just a few minutes.

I'm not going to impugn the character of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. We all want to stop violence against women. That's why Republicans have brought forth this bill. Again, the STALKERS Act could have

been brought forward under Democrat control of the House. It was not, and I'm very disappointed. But I'm proud of Republicans, that we're doing it and we're strengthening the Violence Against Women Act, not weakening the act.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

The question is, Will the House now consider the resolution?

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 239, nays 183, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 253]

YEAS—239

Adams	Fortenberry	Marchant
Aderholt	Foxx	Marino
Akin	Franks (AZ)	McCarthy (CA)
Alexander	Frelinghuysen	McCaul
Amash	Gallegly	McClintock
Amodei	Gardner	McCotter
Austria	Garrett	McHenry
Bachmann	Gerlach	McKeon
Bachus	Gibbs	McKinley
Barletta	Gibson	McMorris Rodgers
Bartlett	Gingrey (GA)	Meehan
Barton (TX)	Gohmert	Mica
Bass (NH)	Goodlatte	Miller (FL)
Benishek	Gosar	Miller (MI)
Berg	Gowdy	Miller, Gary
Biggert	Granger	Mulvaney
Bilbray	Graves (GA)	Murphy (PA)
Bilirakis	Graves (MO)	Myrick
Bishop (UT)	Griffin (AR)	Neugebauer
Black	Griffith (VA)	Noem
Blackburn	Grimm	Nugent
Bonner	Guinta	Nunes
Bono Mack	Guthrie	Nunnelee
Boustany	Hall	Olson
Brady (TX)	Hanna	Palazzo
Brooks	Harper	Paul
Broun (GA)	Harris	Paulsen
Buchanan	Hartzler	Pearce
Bucshon	Hastings (WA)	Pence
Buerkle	Hayworth	Peterson
Burgess	Heck	Petri
Calvert	Hensarling	Platts
Camp	Herger	Poe (TX)
Campbell	Herrera Beutler	Pompeo
Canseco	Huelskamp	Posey
Cantor	Huizenga (MI)	Price (GA)
Capito	Hultgren	Quayle
Carter	Hunter	Reed
Chabot	Hurt	Rehberg
Chaffetz	Issa	Reichert
Coble	Jenkins	Renacci
Coffman (CO)	Johnson (IL)	Ribble
Cole	Johnson (OH)	Rigell
Conaway	Johnson, Sam	Rivera
Cravaack	Jones	Roby
Crawford	Jordan	Roe (TN)
Crenshaw	Kelly	Rogers (AL)
Culberson	King (NY)	Rogers (KY)
Davis (KY)	Kingston	Rogers (MI)
Denham	Kinzinger (IL)	Rohrabacher
Dent	Kline	Rokita
DesJarlais	Lamborn	Rooney
Diaz-Balart	Lance	Ros-Lehtinen
Dold	Landry	Roskam
Dreier	Lankford	Ross (FL)
Duffy	Latham	Royce
Duncan (SC)	LaTourette	Runyan
Duncan (TN)	Latta	Ryan (WI)
Ellmers	Lewis (CA)	Scalise
Emerson	LoBiondo	Schilling
Farenthold	Long	Schmidt
Fincher	Lucas	Schock
Fitzpatrick	Luetkemeyer	Schweikert
Flake	Lummis	Scott (SC)
Fleischmann	Lungren, Daniel E.	Scott, Austin
Fleming	Mack	Scott, David
Flores	Manzullo	Sensenbrenner
Forbes	Marchant	Sessions
Fortenberry	Marino	Shimkus
Foxx	McCarthy (CA)	Shuler
Franks (AZ)	McCaul	Shuster
Frelinghuysen	McClintock	Simpson
Gallegly	McCotter	Smith (NE)
Gardner	McHenry	Smith (NJ)
Garrett	McKeon	Smith (TX)
Gerlach	McKinley	Southerland
Gibbs	McMorris Rodgers	Stearns
Gibson	Meehan	Stivers
Gingrey (GA)	Mica	Stutzman
Gohmert	Miller (FL)	Sullivan
Goodlatte	Miller (MI)	Terry
Gosar	Miller, Gary	Thompson (PA)
Gowdy	Mulvaney	Thornberry
Granger	Murphy (PA)	Tiberi
Graves (GA)	Myrick	Tipton
Graves (MO)	Neugebauer	Turner (NY)
Griffin (AR)	Noem	Turner (OH)
Griffith (VA)	Nugent	Upton
Grimm	Nunes	Walberg
Guinta	Nunnelee	Walden
Guthrie	Olson	Walsh (IL)
Hall	Palazzo	Webster
Hanna	Paul	West
Harper	Paulsen	Westmoreland
Harris	Pearce	Whitfield
Hartzler	Pence	Wilson (SC)
Hastings (WA)	Peterson	Wittman
Hayworth	Petri	Wolf
Heck	Platts	Womack
Hensarling	Poe (TX)	Woodall
Herger	Pompeo	Yoder
Herrera Beutler	Posey	Young (AK)
Huelskamp	Price (GA)	Young (FL)
Huizenga (MI)	Quayle	Young (IN)
Hultgren	Reed	
Hunter	Rehberg	
Hurt	Reichert	
Issa	Renacci	
Jenkins	Ribble	
Johnson (IL)	Rigell	
Johnson (OH)	Rivera	
Johnson, Sam	Roby	
Jones	Roe (TN)	
Jordan	Rogers (AL)	
Kelly	Rogers (KY)	
King (NY)	Rogers (MI)	
Kingston	Rohrabacher	
Kinzinger (IL)	Rokita	
Kline	Rooney	
Lamborn	Ros-Lehtinen	
Lance	Roskam	
Landry	Ross (FL)	
Lankford	Royce	
Latham	Runyan	
LaTourette	Ryan (WI)	
Latta	Scalise	
Lewis (CA)	Schilling	
LoBiondo	Schmidt	
Long	Schock	
Lucas	Schweikert	
Luetkemeyer	Scott (SC)	
Lummis	Scott, Austin	
Lungren, Daniel E.	Scott, David	
Mack	Sensenbrenner	
Manzullo	Sessions	

NAYS—183

Ackerman	Fudge	Nadler
Altmire	Garamendi	Napolitano
Baca	Gonzalez	Neal
Baldwin	Green, Al	Olver
Barrow	Green, Gene	Owens
Bass (CA)	Grijalva	Pallone
Becerra	Gutierrez	Pascrell
Berkley	Hahn	Pastor (AZ)
Berman	Hanabusa	Pelosi
Bishop (GA)	Hastings (FL)	Perlmutter
Bishop (NY)	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenauer	Higgins	Pingree (ME)
Bonamici	Himes	Polis
Boren	Hinchey	Price (NC)
Boswell	Hinojosa	Quigley
Brady (PA)	Hirono	Rahall
Braley (IA)	Hochul	Rangel
Brown (FL)	Holden	Reyes
Butterfield	Holt	Richardson
Capps	Honda	Richmond
Capuano	Hoyer	Ross (AR)
Cardoza	Israel	Rothman (NJ)
Carnahan	Jackson (IL)	Roybal-Allard
Carney	Jackson Lee (TX)	Ruppersberger
Carson (IN)	Johnson (GA)	Rush
Castor (FL)	Johnson, E. B.	Ryan (OH)
Chu	Kaptur	Sánchez, Linda T.
Cicilline	Keating	Sanchez, Loretta
Clarke (MI)	Kildee	Sarbanes
Clarke (NY)	Kind	Schakowsky
Clay	Kissell	Schiff
Cleaver	Kucinich	Schrader
Clyburn	Langevin	Schwartz
Cohen	Larsen (WA)	Scott (VA)
Connolly (VA)	Larson (CT)	Serrano
Conyers	Lee (CA)	Sewell
Cooper	Levin	Sherman
Costa	Lewis (GA)	Sires
Costello	Lipinski	Smith (WA)
Courtney	Loebsack	Speier
Critz	Lofgren, Zoe	Stark
Crowley	Lowey	Sutton
Cuellar	Luján	Thompson (CA)
Cummings	Lynch	Thompson (MS)
Davis (CA)	Maloney	Tierney
Davis (IL)	Markey	Tonko
DeFazio	Matheson	Towns
DeGette	Matsui	Tsongas
DeLauro	McCarthy (NY)	Van Hollen
Deutch	McCollum	Velázquez
Dicks	McDermott	Visclosky
Dingell	McGovern	Walz (MN)
Doggett	McIntyre	Wasserman Schultz
Donnelly (IN)	McNerney	Waters
Doyle	Meeks	Watt
Edwards	Michaud	Waxman
Ellison	Miller (NC)	Welch
Engel	Miller, George	Wilson (FL)
Eshoo	Moore	Woolsey
Farr	Moran	Yarmuth
Fattah	Murphy (CT)	
Frank (MA)		

NOT VOTING—9

Andrews	Chandler	Labrador
Burton (IN)	Filner	Pitts
Cassidy	King (IA)	Slaughter

□ 1318

Messrs. COHEN, CLEAVER, Ms. FUDGE, and Mr. RICHMOND changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. MCCAUL, WEBSTER, and YOUNG of Alaska changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the question of consideration was decided in the affirmative.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 253, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted ''nay.''

□ 1320

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. HARTZLER). The gentlewoman from North Carolina is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), 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

Ms. FOXX. Madam 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 gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, House Resolution 656 provides for a closed rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, and general debate for H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013.

As an original cosponsor of the underlying bill, I am proud to stand with my Republican colleagues in support of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, otherwise known as VAWA.

The House Judiciary Committee-passed version of VAWA before us today is a commonsense proposal to ensure that limited taxpayer dollars are used responsibly and efficiently while also improving access to services for victims. With this bill, we have also worked to add accountability requirements to conduct the necessary oversight of VAWA grant recipients and programs. Our goal is to ensure that more money is spent on direct services and less on administrative bureaucracy.

I commend Representative ADAMS on authoring this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the rule and the underlying bill.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. I thank the gentlelady for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and the underlying bills: H.R. 4970, the Cantor-Adams bill, and H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act.

Before we discuss the unprecedented rule for the Cantor-Adams bill, which has really turned what has traditionally been a bipartisan issue into a political football—to the detriment of women across our country—I would like to say a few words about the National Defense Authorization Act, which is also included in this rule.

I am really dismayed that the Defense authorization bill that House Republicans have brought before us undermines the bipartisan agreement which was reached just last summer. The bill funds defense spending at $8 billion over the levels set in the Budget Control Act and $3 billion over the President's budget request—again, more deficit spending in this Republican bill before us under this rule.

As our deficit spirals out of control, we need to tighten our belt and balance our budget. Instead, this bill doubles down on 10 years of ballooning defense budgets, which have played a major role in our deficit. This bill continues to kick the can down the road toward balancing our budget and leaves an only bigger hole that the Republican tax-and-spend policies continue to dig, putting our Nation deeper and deeper into debt.

Additionally, this bill ties the hands of our military and law enforcement by requiring in statute to keep military detainees in Guantanamo, handcuffing any President, Democrat or Republican, and preventing him from coming up with a plan for what to do with these individuals. This bill panders to our fears by insisting that the detainees remain in Guantanamo interminably. It tries to tell generals how to do their jobs and sets a timetable for troop levels in Afghanistan rather than does our normal civilian process.

Finally, I am disappointed by the political posturing included in the bill. The NDAA used to focus solely on setting defense policy and protecting our Nation. Unfortunately, the Republicans have decided to use this bill to also push political wedge issues. There is language in this bill prohibiting the use of military facilities to conduct same-sex marriages even in States that allow same-sex marriages. It even prevents gay and lesbian chaplains from marrying members of the military to other members of the military.

Further, I am deeply disturbed that, in a bill that governs our national security, language was included that would increase our dependence on foreign oil and that would undermine our long-term energy security interest. This bill's exemption of the Department of Defense from complying with section 526 of the 2007 energy bill hurts water and recreational interests in my State and harms research and development and investment in renewable energy.

Now, sadly, as disappointing as it is to see political posturing in the Defense authorization bill under this rule, it is truly horrifying to see the political posturing in the provisions of the Violence Against Women Act, which under this House version would likely lead to more violence against women. The Violence Against Women Act has a long bipartisan history. Both sides have traditionally sought to protect all victims of domestic violence, not just some. Sadly, this bill before us undoes much of the work that previous Congresses have done and accomplished on this issue for no reason when we have a bipartisan Senate version of the bill that protects all women from the abuse of partners.

Why would we exclude certain women in this country? If a woman is in a lesbian relationship, should she not be protected if she is a victim of domestic abuse? If a woman doesn't have the documentation to be in this country and is here illegally, should she not be protected under this law?

VAWA protects women who are actually convicted of other crimes. If a woman stole a car and served time, was convicted of that crime, she is still protected from domestic abuse under VAWA. Yet nonviolent offenders of our civil code, like undocumented immigrants, would no longer be protected because they would effectively face deportation after 4 years for testifying against the perpetrators of their abuse, making it much less likely that they would bring the perpetrators to justice and end the vicious cycle of domestic abuse in their families.

The majority in the House has offered no explanation for their refusal to allow us to take up the Senate bipartisan bill. My colleague VIRGINIA FOXX was noncommittal in her response about whether we would be taking up the Senate bipartisan bill. If she doesn't know the answer—and I certainly take her on her word—I would hope that somebody on the other side would come to the floor and say, Can we take up this Senate bipartisan bill? And if not, why not? And if so, when?

It passed the Senate with 68 votes, Republicans and Democrats. This is the time to stand up and see if our colleagues on both sides of the aisle are serious about responding to the insidious domestic violence crimes that occur every day throughout this country. Frankly, that could start by the defeat of this bill, allowing for an open process in considering this bill on the floor of the House.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. I would now like to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS).

Ms. JENKINS. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

The Violence Against Women Act is an important tool for preventing domestic violence and sexual assault and for supporting the victims of these crimes. There is broad bipartisan agreement that this essential legislation must be renewed.

While the House bill protects the victims of domestic violence and improves services and education to prevent and address these crimes on college campuses, our legislation also goes beyond the Senate bill by ensuring that taxpayer resources help victims—not Washington bureaucrats—by limiting administrative expenses, requiring annual audits and combating fraud.

While the House legislation takes enormous strides in protecting the victims of these truly horrific crimes, the legislation also takes great care to ensure the funds allocated by this bill are treated with the responsibility and care the victims and taxpayers deserve:

H.R. 4970 requires VAWA audits be performed by the Department of Justice and that the Attorney General improves the coordination between the grant-making offices to reduce duplication and overlap in funding. H.R. 4970 prohibits the award of grant funds to nonprofit organizations that hold money in offshore accounts in order to avoid paying their Federal taxes, and it limits the use of funds for salaries and administrative expenses to 5 percent of funds authorized under the act.

□ 1330

The Violence Against Women Act has bipartisan support in both the House and Senate, and any attempt to exploit this important law as a partisan political issue is contemptible.

I encourage my colleagues in the House to vote in support of this legislation today to protect the victims of violent crime and support the responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, for nearly two decades, Congress has repeatedly reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act on a near unanimous and bipartisan basis.

Since the act became law, incidents of domestic violence have dropped by more than 60 percent and the reporting rate of domestic violence has risen by 51 percent.

The 2012 reauthorization is a chance for Congress to reaffirm its commitment to the protection of women across this Nation. That is why it's particularly disheartening to see such a vital piece of legislation fall victim to putting politics ahead of people.

What are the facts? Tonight, an American woman will join the one in four women who have been the victims of severe physical domestic violence. To her, this reauthorization is more than just a bill; it's security. The bill is security for the one in six women who have been raped in their lifetime. It's security for the mothers, daughters, and sisters across this Nation, and its security for the selfless individuals who tirelessly work to bring aid.

Now is not the time to take a step back, to abandon these victims. This Congress must expand its efforts and ensure that all victims are assisted, no matter what their race, religion, or sexual orientation. Too many in this body have chosen to fight against these protections. They want to fight efforts to extend LGBT individuals equal protection, even though they're less likely to receive protective orders, more likely to be turned away, and because of this are less likely to report their attack to the police. They deserve equal protection, and there's a bipartisan bill that does just that, but it's falling victim to election-year politics.

In America, we have to combat the abuse of women in our own society—no matter their country of origin—if we're going to continue to have the moral authority to advocate for the rights of people abroad. There is also a bipartisan bill that would continue to protect immigrant survivors by granting them special visas and by preventing retribution from their attackers, yet there are some in this body who would also deny these women protection.

These days, bipartisan compromise is hard to come by, no matter how hard some of us try. We are rarely handed an opportunity where there is such universal agreement. VAWA has a proud history of bipartisan support. Let's continue that tradition, put politics aside, and pass a bipartisan VAWA reauthorization bill that protects all victims.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my colleague from North Carolina, Congresswoman ELLMERS.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Thank you to my colleague from North Carolina.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and the underlying bill and call for the passage of H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012. Since its enactment in 1994, VAWA has helped many women escape abuse and enabled them to seek help through its victim services program.

We're here today debating something that is a good policy and common sense and should be supported in the same bipartisan manner that we have seen throughout the two decades since its inception. Violence against women does not occur along party lines, and neither should reauthorization of these programs. We must work together in a bipartisan manner to protect women from domestic violence, rape, and stalking. Partisan posturing should not be placed above the urgent needs of these victims.

The House's reauthorization makes several key improvements to the Senate bill and nearly doubles the resources for eliminating the backlog of unprocessed rape evidence kits, while cracking down on the fraud identified in the immigration program. This bill also brings great accountability to the grant administration by ensuring that funding is spent on the victims, not Washington bureaucrats. The House's reauthorization of VAWA is and always will be about the victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

I am proud to support this bill and will continue to fight and protect women and victims of abuse through commonsense legislation.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and urge a ''no'' vote on the flawed Violence Against Women Act that my Republican colleagues will bring to the floor.

They had an opportunity to bring the bipartisan Senate bill to the floor, but chose not to do so. That's a shame, because the Violence Against Women Act has been a bipartisan and noncontroversial effort for almost 20 years now. The update passed the Senate on a bipartisan basis just last month.

Why does everything have to be a partisan fight here on the floor of the House? Over the past year, my Republican colleagues here in the House have blocked an important jobs package; they have stalled the adoption of the national transportation and infrastructure bill; they've dragged their feet on help for students and the impending increase to the student loan rate; and now they have turned what has been a bipartisan effort to protect the victims of domestic violence into a senseless political fight. Republicans would not even allow debate on amendments so that we could improve their flawed bill. And this is serious, because in my home State of Florida, there were over 113,000 crimes of domestic violence reported in 2010. If the Republican bill were to pass, more domestic violence crimes would go unreported, more abusers would be free, and more victims would be harmed.

This bill works in opposition to the very purpose of the legislation to protect all victims of domestic violence. Not just some victims, but all victims. Advocates across the country who are on the front lines in aiding women and victims every day have announced their opposition.

Please defeat this rule so we can call up the bipartisan and improved version from the Senate.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for her leadership on the rule.

I also want to thank Congresswoman SANDY ADAMS from Florida for her leadership on the issue. I think it is so instructive to all of us as women of the House that we have had a female law enforcement officer who has been a leader in domestic violence policy in addressing this issue to help walk us through what works, what doesn't, and where we need to tweak this.

Many Members of this House, and many women are like me. They've worked on establishing domestic violence and child advocacy centers. And to hear from Congresswoman ADAMS the specifics—to bring more accountability to bear and to make certain that funding gets to the victims has been her priority, and a job well-done on that.

Some of the stats indeed tell us why we need to do this. In Tennessee, where I'm from, 52.1 percent of all crimes against persons are domestic violence.

Madam Speaker, I urge support for the rule.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. I thank my colleague.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and to the underlying bill that will actually roll back protections for women across this Nation.

The Violence Against Women Act is a vital piece of legislation to be sure. It established a comprehensive response to prevent relationship violence, sexual assault, and stalking; to support survivors; and to hold perpetrators accountable. It is also a symbol that relationship violence and sexual assault is real and that it is unacceptable.

For the past 20 years, this law has been a shining symbol that Congress can put aside its petty differences and we can come together to do what is right for violence victims and survivors.

□ 1340

Now the bill before us tarnishes that symbol.

H.R. 4970 marks a backsliding in violence protections, leaving more women out in the cold without legal resources or social supports, just when they need it most.

And the issues are not just for immigrants or the LGBT community—although the way the bill before us ignores their pain is shameful—but also for women on college campuses, those in need of safe housing, tribal women. And that is why hundreds of groups across the country—service providers, law enforcement, health care workers—have come out against this bill.

Now we could address the problems in this bill if we were allowed an opportunity to vote on the Moore-Conyers amendment, which I cosponsored. The Moore-Conyers amendment mirrors the recently passed bipartisan Senate bill. But the House leadership unilaterally decided to block it from even coming to a vote. The majority has, once again, put rigid ideology over commonsense compromise, and this time at the expense of violence survivors and their families.

Reauthorization is critical for the Violence Against Women Act, but it needs to be done right. I urge the majority to drop the partisan politics, join a bipartisan coalition, and support these survivors.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I now would like to yield 5 minutes to Mr. NUGENT from Florida, my distinguished colleague on the Rules Committee.

Mr. NUGENT. I thank my fellow Rules Committee member, Dr. FOXX, for allowing me to speak on this issue not only for women but for all Americans. I also want to thank my Florida colleague SANDY ADAMS for her leadership shown on this issue.

I spent my entire career as a law enforcement officer, 36 years, and the last 10 years as a sheriff. When you are a cop, you usually don't get to see people in the best light. Getting called to somebody's house or somebody coming to your office isn't typically something that is a highlight of their day. It's because they are in need of help.

Throughout my entire career, I saw some of the worst that man has to

offer, and no small part of that was domestic violence. During my four decades as a cop and sheriff, I saw the results of domestic violence: battered partners, both men and women; children either physically or emotionally hurt in the crossfire between their fighting parents; victims who were suffering, scared, intimidated, and didn't know where to go for justice.

If you will look at the State of Florida and what it did with regards to domestic violence, it's clear that it was not just about a husband and wife. It's about those folks that live within a home. It's about their relationship within that home as it affects their children, as it affects each other. It doesn't specifically say that it has to be a man or a woman. It doesn't identify that. It talks about a relationship—not a casual relationship, but a relationship where they're intimate with each other, they spend time with each other, they're sexually active with each other. It doesn't say that it has to be a man and a woman. It says, these individuals have certain rights under domestic violence law and also the ability to get an injunction for protection.

I have seen abusers on both sides. I have seen those who were married, those who were boyfriend and girlfriend, and those who were boyfriend and boyfriend or girlfriend and girlfriend commit atrocious crimes on each other. It had nothing to do with marriage. It had everything to do with the relationships that they had within their homes.

So as we move forward, those on the other side of the aisle want to add something to this piece of legislation that's already covered. It already covers those relationships. If you start defining a particular relationship, what if you leave one out? In here, it is very broad and allows us, in law enforcement, to be very protective of those that need protection. Whether it's stalking, intimidation, voyeurism, it doesn't matter. And oftentimes, women are the victims of domestic violence, but a man can just as easily be a victim of domestic violence, and I have seen that, too.

The Violence Against Women Act protects and prevents all types of intimate partner crime regardless of the gender of either the criminal or the victim. This legislation funds the programs that not only help men and women who have been hurt, but it also helps law enforcement prevent these crimes from ever happening.

I have heard a number of my colleagues talk about what isn't in the bill. They say, for example, it doesn't include ''sexual orientation'' as one of the protected classes. The Violence Against Women Act is and always has been gender-neutral. That's the beauty of this piece of legislation. It's gender-neutral.

Under the ''real'' VAWA, as some people call it, domestic violence is interpreted as intimate partner violence. It legally includes felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by spouses or ex-spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends, and ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends.

Now I'm not going to say this House legislation is perfect, but it makes significant improvements to streamline our Nation's domestic violence programs. In fact, the exact same funding authorization levels in the Senate bill is included in this bill, $680 million in funding per year for the next 5 years. Moreover, the manager's amendment brings the House even more in line with the Senate's authorization.

Madam Speaker, as you probably know, this week is National Police Week, and we certainly know about domestic violence. The men and women that worked for me, as a sheriff, knew about it. SANDY ADAMS, a former cop, introduced this legislation. And we've seen firsthand what domestic violence does to our families.

By passing this legislation, we get a step closer to making sure these victims receive the services they need. That's why I am encouraging my colleagues to support the rule, support this legislation, and let it get to conference with the Senate so we can bring these services to the men and women who need it the most.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. When one out of four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes, it is unconscionable that the majority would try to roll back the protections in the Violence Against Women Act.

Since the act first passed in 1994, it has changed the landscape for American women. Domestic violence has dropped by over 50 percent. And in a historical bipartisan fashion, the Senate passed a bill that modernizes the act for our times. It consolidates programs, takes additional steps to reach victims of domestic violence.

Madam Speaker, 200 national organizations, 500 State and local organizations, including the National District Attorneys Association, the National Sheriffs' Association—my colleague who just spoke is a former sheriff, but his association is supporting the Senate bill and not this House bill—and the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association all support the Senate bill. And our colleague from Wisconsin, Congresswoman MOORE, has put forward legislation that mirrors that bipartisan approach. But instead of moving that bipartisan bill forward, the majority has put forward an alternative bill that, in fact, risks the lives and the health of women.

The Department of Justice estimates that one out of every three Native American women will be raped and two out of five will be victims of domestic violence. The majority's bill removes the provisions that are essential to ensuring that Indian women have access to the act. The Senate bill and Congresswoman MOORE's bill strengthen protections in the act for immigrant women; yet the majority's bill would endanger the safety of immigrants.

In 2010, nearly half of lesbian and gay survivors were turned away from domestic violence shelters or denied services because of their sexual orientation. The majority's bill would continue to deny those individuals the community protections afforded by the act.

We are talking about women's lives. This is no place for partisan games. The rule before us would roll back the central protections that have made a difference for so many women in this Nation.

I urge the majority to bring Congresswoman MOORE's bill to the floor. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this rule.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I now would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act.

□ 1350

Domestic violence is an all-too-common reality, occurring most everywhere here in the United States, and one that deeply impacts all involved. In Ohio alone, there were reportedly 70,717 calls in 2010 for domestic violence incidents. While not all of these resulted in criminal charges, it is vitally important that law enforcement have the knowledge and resources necessary to appropriately respond and investigate domestic violence calls. It is also crucial that all victims of domestic violence have access to the help they need to get out of a harmful situation and overcome not only physical abuse but the emotional scars that deeply impact the lives of victims.

I am confident that H.R. 4970 would play an integral role in alleviating domestic violence in our communities by providing more than $680 million for funding per year to help prevent domestic violence and protect victims of abuse. This legislation would also increase resources for sexual assault investigations, prosecutions, and victim services, in addition to strengthening penalties for abusers. Importantly, this legislation also seeks to promote awareness for the prevention of violence by funding State prevention education programs and enhancements for campus programs.

As a son, a husband, a brother to two sisters, a father of two grown women, and a grandfather of four little girls, I understand the importance of preventing domestic violence against women and also ensuring that all women have the necessary resources and protection should they ever be in need.

The number of occurrences of domestic violence, physical violence, and stalking within the United States is

staggering and simply unacceptable. It is my hope that this reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act will have an immediate impact on reducing domestic violence and improving services for its victims.

Mr. POLIS. It is my honor to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY. I urge a ''no'' vote. This bill is but one more assault on what has become, sadly but surely, known as the war against women.

A government has no greater responsibility than to keep its citizens safe, but in its current form, this bill says there are some we will not help. We will not protect Native Americans, LGBT people, and immigrant people.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle would not extend the protections of this bill to tribal residents. Why? Do they not suffer when they are assaulted? This bill, in its current form, would not protect people from discrimination in the LGBT community. Why? Do they not bleed when they are struck? And this bill, in its current form, eliminates the path to citizenship for some visa holders who have been victims of sex trafficking, torture, and rape. Why? Do they not bruise and bleed when they are beaten and battered?

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

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 20 seconds.

Mrs. MALONEY. Thank you.

There is an indifference to the suffering of some—just some—in this bill that is as chilling and callous as anything I have ever seen in this Chamber in modern times.

I urge a strong ''no'' vote on the rule and the underlying bill.

Ms. FOXX. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. BUERKLE).

Ms. BUERKLE. I rise this afternoon in support of the rule and the underlying bill in H.R. 4970. I am so pleased to stand here with my colleagues in support of this rule.

This is a particularly meaningful bill for me because, in 1994, when I graduated from law school, I became aware of a program that the Women's Bar Association had. That was 1994, and that's when the original VAWA was enacted. The program was that we could do pro bono work and work in our domestic violence shelter. For all of these many years, I have been involved in domestic violence. So it's particularly meaningful to me that the time when I first got involved in this—and it was thanks to a very courageous law school professor I had—that we now are reauthorizing VAWA that was originally from 1994.

Madam Speaker, I just become so distressed when I hear the allegations that there is a war on women. When we sat down and we began discussing VAWA, we sat down with the understanding that Americans deserve equal protection under the law. We are not going to single out. We are not going to distinguish one victim from another. Any person who is a victim of domestic violence is a victim of domestic violence. Beyond that, it should be of no concern.

However, I will say this—and my colleague SANDY ADAMS has done such a magnificent job with this—when we began to have concerns after we dropped this bill last week, we went back to the table. We heard from Members who have large Native American populations in their districts and Members who are Native Americans with regard to the issue. We heard with regard to the illegal alien issue. We went back to the table and came forth with a manager's amendment to begin to address those issues. That's the right thing to do. That's what domestic violence victims should expect from this House—sit down, figure this out, and make sure we go forward with what is in the best interest of the victims. And that's what the House of Representatives did.

I strongly support this rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. POLIS. It is my honor to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Let me give one example of how important this legislation is and how this bill before us would eliminate important provisions to protect women from abuse.

Several years ago, a teenage girl from Trenton came to my office for help. She'd been abused by her parents and abandoned by them. When she came to my office, she was living in a shelter participating in a transitional living program that required part-time employment. She had come to the United States legally, but she needed help. Because of VAWA, I was able to show her how she could secure her permanent resident status and work authorization. After I helped her get work authorization and permanent resident status, she got her life back on track. VAWA made that possible.

This bill would remove essential provisions of VAWA that allow victims of abuse to petition for permanent residency by themselves; and by removing those provisions, this bill would leave this girl and countless other victims of domestic abuse with no help, no support, and potentially at the mercy of their abusers.

Vote ''no'' on this rule. Vote ''no'' on the bill.

Ms. FOXX. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and in strong support of the underlying bill, the Violence Against Women Act.

Madam Speaker, for several years, I had the great honor to serve on the board of my local domestic violence safe house. And I call it a safe house. We didn't call it a shelter. We called it a safe house. So I have personally seen women and children who so desperately needed that safe haven to escape from a cycle of violence. Throughout my service here in Congress, I consistently fought to make certain that support is there for all of the safe houses across my district.

Those women and all those victims of domestic violence, who far too often suffer in silence, need to know that they are not alone and that there are people who care. Today, this House is doing what we need to do, by taking a stand in defense of those who face the danger of domestic violence, by passing this reauthorization.

I certainly applaud the author of the bill, SANDY ADAMS from Florida. She's kept politics away from crafting this bill. Instead, she's really focused squarely on protecting the victims of domestic violence.

The bill that we are debating here today produces funding at the same level as what was passed by the Senate, but I think it allocates that funding in a way that better supports the victims of domestic violence. For instance, this bill doesn't make any special carveouts for any particular victim group, because it protects everybody equally. It also includes outstanding revisions developed by listening to those involved in protecting victims from across the Nation.

It strengthens penalties for sexual assault and abuse. It improves Federal stalking laws. It helps young women in college by working to prevent violence on our campuses through improved education programs. And it dramatically improves emergency and transitional housing services.

As well, the Senate bill mirrors current law, which only mandates 40 percent of the funding in the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 to address a backlog of rape testing kits which are required, quite frankly, to successfully prosecute rape cases. Our bill mandates that 75 percent of the funding be used for that purpose so that we can eliminate the backlog that exists and put rapists where they belong, and that's in prison.

So, Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me today in standing up for women in need and all victims of violence by supporting this outstanding legislation.

□ 1400

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, we need to work together to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act; but, unfortunately, H.R. 4970 is seriously flawed and should not pass.

Among its many flaws, it harms immigrant women and fails to protect the LGBT community. It also creates new

mandatory minimum sentences. Mandatory minimums have been studied extensively, and they've been found to be ineffective in addressing crime, while at the same time they distort the rational sentencing systems, they discriminate against minorities, and they often violate common sense.

Mandatory minimums can be particularly harmful in domestic relations cases, domestic violence cases where the victim and the abuser have a prior relationship, and where the victim of abuse may be less likely to report the abuse knowing that, if convicted, the abuser is certain to go to prison for 5 or 10 years without parole. That's why many organizations dedicated to ending domestic violence and working hard for the reauthorization of VAWA are opposed to the mandatory minimum provisions in the rule.

On top of these problems in the reported bill, the Rules Committee adopted a manager's amendment that, among other problems, deletes protections against discrimination in hiring by religious organizations using VAWA funds.

Since the 1960s, we have had, as a Federal policy, a prohibition against discrimination based on religion when using Federal funds. The 1964 Civil Rights Act had an exemption for churches and other religious organizations using their own funds to be able to consider religion in hiring. However, the manager's amendment specifically allows those groups to discriminate based on religion with Federal funds. We should not pass a bill that allows a person applying for a job paid for with Federal funds to be discriminated against based on religion.

Madam Speaker, we must work hard to reauthorize VAWA; but, unfortunately, H.R. 4970 in its current form is not the version of VAWA we should pass, and the rule does not allow amendments to improve the bill. So I urge defeat of this rule.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I now would like to yield 2 minutes to our distinguished colleague, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS).

Mrs. LUMMIS. Madam Speaker, I rise also to support the rule and to support the Violence Against Women Act. This bill will support programs and organizations that help assist the victims of domestic abuse, stalking, and sexual assault. And it does so in a way that includes much-needed accountability measures so we can be sure that more of the funds go to the victims who need it rather than to Washington bureaucrats.

When I was practicing law, I represented some victims of domestic violence, including men, women, and children, when I was doing guardian ad litem work. And I, further, had a law office bookkeeper who was murdered by her husband while she was working for us. It was traumatic for the entire office.

On Indian reservations in my State and in communities where there is a hidden element of domestic abuse that you see every Friday morning in the courtroom when they have stacked settings for these types of cases, you see things you wouldn't even believe are going on in your own communities. That's why it's so important we have a bill that is efficient and gets the money to those victims, not to bureaucrats in Washington. That's why I support this rule. That's why I support the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1¼ minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS).

Ms. EDWARDS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the rule and the underlying bill that rolls back protections for domestic violence victims and survivors, and I include three letters representing hundreds of organizations—law enforcement organizations, advocacy organizations around the country—in opposition to the rule.

Before coming to Congress, I founded and was the first executive director of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. I've trained thousands of police officers and judges, held victims' hands in courts. I've done intake in shelters and held their children in emergency rooms and answered calls on hotlines.

This bill, the underlying bill and the rule, do great damage to the work that we've done across the aisle as advocates and leaders of good will to protect the interests of battered women of domestic violence, victims and survivors.

Since the passage in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has been a bipartisan piece of legislation. It has revolutionized the way violent crimes against women are prosecuted and prevented. Never would I have imagined that, when working on this 18 years ago, that we'd be in this Congress rolling back the protections that have been expanded to protect women, victims, survivors across this country and their children. It really is a sad day in this Congress. We should be ashamed of what we're doing.

We should make sure that we expand protections for women, for immigrant women, for lesbian and gay men and women, and to make sure that we pass a rule that truly is bipartisan in this Congress that reflects the values and the needs and the spirit of the 1994 law.

MAY 15, 2012.

Re: Update—Manager's amendments to VAWA (H.R. 4970) do not fix critical problems. H.R. 4970 eliminates protections for battered immigrants; harms victims.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: As a diverse coalition of immigration, faith, labor, civil rights, human rights and community organizations serving and advocating on behalf of immigrant victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, we urge you to oppose H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012 (VAWA) (Adams, R–FL) when it comes to the House floor.

The amendments offered by Representative Adams (''manager's package'') that will be considered by the Rules Committee today are inadequate and do not correct the major problems with H.R. 4970. With the manager's package. H.R. 4970 will still roll back existing protections for battered immigrants that were created with bi-partisan congressional support.

Enacted in 1994 and reauthorized twice in 2000 and 2005, VAWA has a long history of uniting lawmakers with the common purpose of protecting survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. When VAWA was conceived, Congress recognized that the noncitizen status of battered immigrants can make them particularly vulnerable. Abusers often exploit their victims' undocumented status, leaving the victim afraid to report the abuse to law enforcement and making them fearful of assisting with the prosecution of these crimes.

As modified, H.R. 4970 effectively eradicates protections created by VAWA that have been available for almost twenty years to immigrant victims of violence. The bill establishes an extremely onerous adjudication process for victims to receive protection that is not required in other areas of the law. Finally, it wastes government resources when allegations of fraud have not been substantiated.

H.R. 4970 eliminates protections for crime victims offered by the U visa.

Deters immigrant victims from reporting crimes by denying nearly all U visa recipients the protections offered by lawful permanent resident status. By offering only temporary relief, H.R. 4970 will eliminate an important incentive for victims to report crimes and silence victims who fear deportation. A victim could be deported and be forced to leave her children behind with an abuser if he has legal status but she does not.

Endangers crime victims by making it extremely difficult for them to obtain U visa protection. H.R. 4970 needlessly requires that an investigation or prosecution is being actively pursued. Current law already requires that law enforcement certify that the victim has been or is likely to be helpful to an investigation or prosecution.

H.R. 4970 requires that the victim help identify the perpetrator. Many sexual assault victims never get a good look at the perpetrator.

H.R. 4970 denies battered immigrants the protections of ''self-petitioning.''

Gives perpetrators tools to interfere with a victim's immigration case.

Forces every VAWA self-petitioner to participate in two face-to-face interviews with DHS officials, subjecting them to unnecessary additional screening that can be dangerous for victims who may have to account for their every movement to the abuser.

Requires untrained local field office staff conduct in-person interviews with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Long delays to secure initial interviews at local offices will put victims trying to leave abusive relationship at greater risk.

Endangers the safety of battered immigrants by suspending adjudication of their case if there is an open criminal investigation or prosecution of the perpetrator.

H.R. 4970 requires DHS officials to conduct expensive and time consuming reviews of the victims' cases that are not required in other areas of law. These wasteful reviews are motivated by unsubstantiated claims of fraud and abuse within VAWA programs.

H.R. 4970 endangers victims, and undoes years of bipartisan progress made in previous VAWA bills by taking us to a time before 1994 when abusers were allowed to use immigration status as a tool for further abuse. When H.R. 4970 is brought to the floor of the

House of Representatives, we urge you to vote NO. This bill goes against the core of VAWA by eliminating protections for victims and placing victims in danger.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mony Ruiz-Velasco, National Immigrant Justice Center, or Grace Huang, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Sincerely,

America's Voice Education Fund; American Civil Liberties Union; American Immigration Lawyers Association; American Jewish Committee; Americans for Immigrant Justice; Asian American Justice Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice; Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence; ASISTA; Benjamin N. Cardozo Human Rights and Genocide Law Clinic; Break the Cycle; California Partnership to End Domestic Violence; Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities; Centro Legal de la Raza; Church World Service, Immigration and Refugee Program; Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society; Human Rights Defense Center; Hutto Visitation Program.

Immigrant Rights Clinic at Rutgers School of Law; Immigration Equality; Immigration Law Center of Minnesota; Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community; International Institute of Buffalo; International Organization for Adolescents; Jesuit Social Research Institute/Loyola University New Orleans; Jewish Council for Public Affairs; Jewish Labor Committee; Jewish Women International; Kids in Need of Defense; Legal Aid Justice Center; Legal Services of New Jersey; Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition.

National Center for Victims of Crime; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence; National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP); National Council of Jewish Women; National Immigrant Justice Center; National Immigration Forum; National Immigration Law Center; National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild; National Organization for Women; National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault; National Network to End Domestic Violence; National Resource Center on Domestic Violence; Northwest Immigrant Rights Project; Physicians for Human Rights; Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project; Rabbis for Human Rights-North America; Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network; South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT).

Texans United for Families; Tahirih Justice Center; The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; The Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ; The Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights at the University of Chicago; Vermont Immigration and Asylum Advocates; VIDA Legal Assistance, Inc.; Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance; Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Women of Color Network; Women's Refugee Commission; Who Is My Neighbor? Inc.

MAY 14, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. ERIC CANTOR,
Majority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. STENY HOYER,
Minority Whip, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER, MINORITY LEADER PELOSI, MAJORITY LEADER CANTOR, AND MINORITY WHIP HOYER: We, the undersigned organizations, represent millions of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and the professionals who serve them, throughout the United States and territories. We would like to express our strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the bill introduced by Rep. Sandy Adams (R–FL) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

As you know, Congress has recognized the severity of violence against women and our need for a national strategy since the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994. Over the last 18 years, this landmark federal law's comprehensive approach to violence against women has had dramatic results. VAWA funds are used to:

Train over 500,000 law enforcement personnel every year,

Support sexual assault services in every state; when victims receive advocate-assisted services following assaults, rape survivors are 59 percent more likely to have police reports taken than survivors without advocates whose reports are only taken 41 percent of the time, and

Support programs that reduce domestic violence homicides; as an example, between 1993 and 2007, the rate of intimate partner homicides of females decreased by 35 percent and the rate of intimate partner homicides of males decreased 46 percent.

We all support a strong, bipartisan VAWA reauthorization bill similar to what the Senate passed last month, which would continue the life-saving protections and services needed by victims and their families. Again, H.R. 4970, which recently passed out of the House Judiciary Committee by a near party-line vote, would be a rollback of years of progress and likely increase the number of women and children who could be hurt. While we respect Congresswoman Adams' personal commitment to the issue of violence against women and girls, we must oppose her harmful bill. H.R. 4970 is genuinely dangerous for immigrant women and their families. It includes damaging provisions that create obstacles for immigrant victims to report crimes, increases danger for immigrant victims by eliminating important confidentiality protections, and undermines effective anti-fraud protections that exist in current law.

While embracing many elements of the bipartisan reauthorization that recently passed the Senate, the bill excludes key improvements that were included in the Senate reauthorization. It expressly rejects protections for men and women who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and eliminates strong protections and justice for women and children who are beaten or abused on Tribal lands by perpetrators who are not members of a particular tribe. And it removes a key requirement that would more easily allow victims to move from one subsidized housing program to another in order to avoid an abuser and drops an important provision that would tackle the violence that occurs on our nation's college campuses.

We respectfully request that you reconsider advancing this legislation and instead focus on developing a bipartisan bill modeled after H.R. 4271, the companion bill to the Senate-passed version of VAWA.

Thank you for your past efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and children. We look forward to working with you to craft a bill that works to protect all victims and directs resources to this urgent task in the most effective way possible.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women; A New Hope Center, Inc.; Advocates for Youth; African Services Committee; Akiak Native Community; Alianza—National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence; AAUW; American Federation of Teachers; American Red Cross Rape Crisis Services; Americans for Immigrant Justice; Amnesty International USA; Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence; ASISTA Immigration Assistance; Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies; Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP); Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project; Black Women's Health Imperative; Break the Cycle; Business and Professional Women's Foundation.

Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities; Center for Legal and Social Justice; Charging Buffalo Society; Children's Civil Rights Union; Coalition of Labor Union Women; Coalition on Human Needs; Compass Rape Crisis & Counseling Center; Covenant House International; Cumbee Center to Assist Abused Persons; Domestic Violence Alternatives/Sexual Assault Center; Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project; End Violence Against Women International; Enlace Comunitario; Farmworker Justice; Feminist Majority Foundation; Forensic Healthcare Consulting; Friends Committee on National Legislation; Futures Without Violence, formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund; Global Workers Justice Alliance.

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.; Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS); Holistic Living Project; Human Rights Campaign; Immigrant Ability; INCourage, Advocacy Beyond Purpose; Indian Law Resource Center; Indigenous Women's Justice Institute; International Institute of Buffalo; Jewish Council for Public Affairs; Jewish Federations of North America; Jewish Labor Committee; Jewish Women International; Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs (JACPAC); Justice & Mercy Legal Aid Clinic.

L.U.N.A; La Casa de las Madres; La Esperanza; La Mariposa Enterprises; Latin American Association; Latinas Unidas Por Un Nuevo Amanecer; Legal Momentum; Manavi; Media Equity Collaborative; Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office; Mental Health America of Licking County; MESA; Mosaic Family Services; National Alliance to End Sexual Violence; National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF); National Association of Human Rights Workers; National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators; National Center for Transgender Equality; National Center for Victims of Crime; National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence.

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence; National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.; National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs; National Congress of American Indians; National Council of Jewish Women; National Council of Women's Organizations; National Domestic Violence Hotline; National Education Association; National Employment Law Project; National Health Care for the Homeless Council; National Immigration Project of the National

Lawyers Guild; National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health; National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty; National Legal Aid & Defender Association; National Low Income Housing Coalition; National Network to End Domestic Violence; National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS); National Organization for Women.

National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault; National Resource Center on Domestic Violence; National Women's Conference Committee; National Women's Health Network; National Women's Law Center; Native Women's Coalition; NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby; Paso Del Norte Civil Rights Project; Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Rape Victim Advocates; Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association; Redwood Justice Fund; Refugio del Rio Grande, Inc.; Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice; Rural Women's Health Project; Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law; Share Time Wisely Consulting Services; Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team; Stop Abuse Campaign.

Tahirih Justice Center; The Domestic Violence Action Center; The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; The Legal Project; The NAACP; Time To Tell; Tiyospaye Winyan Maka; Turning Anger into Change; UNANIMA International; UnidosNow; Union for Reform Judaism; Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations; United Church of Christ; United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries; United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society; United South and Eastern Tribes; Uniting Three Fires Against Violence; UNO Immigration Ministry; Urban Justice Center.

Vera House, Inc.; Victim Rights Law Center; Victims Services of Behavioral Connections; VOICE MALE Magazine; Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii; Wider Opportunities for Women; Women Against Abuse; Women for Genuine Security; Women in Federal Law Enforcement, Inc.; Women of Color Network; Women of Reform Judaism; Women's Law Project; YWCA USA.

ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS OPPOSED TO H.R. 4970 OR TO KEY PROVISIONS IN THE BILL

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.; Advocates for Human Rights; African Services Committee; Alachua County Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center; Alaska Federation of Natives; American Bar Association; American Civil Liberties Union; American Federation of Labor; American Immigration Lawyers Association; Americans for Immigrant Justice; America's Voice Education Fund; Anindita Dasgupta, MA. Doctoral Candidate at the University of California, San Diego; Anita Raj, Ph.D. Professor of Medicine and Global Public Health at the University of California, San Diego; Artemis Justice Center; ASHA for Women; Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund; Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence.

Boston University Civil Litigation Program; Break the Cycle; Campaign for Community Change; Canal Alliance; Captain Maria Alvarenga Watkins, (Retired) Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C.; Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities Casa Esperanza; Central American Resource Center; Chief Brian Kyes, Chelsea Police Department, Massachusetts; Chief Pete Helein, Appleton Wisconsin Police Department; Christian Community Development Association; Church World Service; Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice; Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault; Community Action and Human Services Department; Community Immigration Law Center; Connecticut Legal Services Inc.; Cris M. Sullivan, Ph.D., Professor, Ecological/Community Psychology, Associate Chair, Psychology Department.

Detective Sergeant Robert Mahoney, Peabody Police Department, Massachusetts; Detective Shelli Sonnenberg, Boise Police Department, Idaho; Detective Stacey Ivie, Alexandria Police Department, Virginia; Domestic Violence in the African American Community; DREAM Activist Virginia; Education Not Deportation Project of the United We Dream Network; El Rescate Legal Services, Inc.; Empire Justice Center; Enlace Comunitario; Esperanza; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Evan Stark, Ph.D., MA, MSW, Professor and Director of Public Health, School of Public Affairs and Administration, Rutgers University-Newark & Chair, Department of Urban Health Administration, UMDNJ—School of Public Health; FaithAction International House; Families for Freedom; Families Against Mandatory Minimums; Feminist Majority; Florida Coastal Immigrant Rights Clinic; Franciscan Action Network; Fuerza Latina; Futures Without Violence.

Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights; Giselle Hass, PsyD, Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center, Center for Applied Legal Studies; Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society; Helene Berman, RN, Ph.D., President of the Nursing Network on Violence Against Women International; Human Rights Campaign; Human Rights Initiative of North Texas; Human Rights Watch; Immigrant Defense Project; Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota; Immigration Equality; inMotion, Inc.; InterCultural Advocacy Institute; Inter Tribal Council of Arizona; International Institute of the Bay Area; Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Clinic University of Florida, Levin College of Law.

Jacquelyn Campbell, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, Anna D. Wolf Chair, The Johns Hopkins; University School of Nursing and National Director, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Faculty Scholars; Jay G. Silverman, Ph.D. Professor of Medicine and Global Health; Division of Global Public Health Senior Fellow, Center on Global Justice University of California at San Diego, School of Medicine Adjunct Associate; Professor of Society, Human Development and Health Harvard School of Public Health; Jewish Women International; Just Neighbors; Justice For Our Neighbors-Southeastern Michigan; Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights; La Fe Multi-Ethnic Ministries, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship/USA; La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians; Latin American Coalition; LatinoJustice PRLDEF; Leadership Conference of Women Religious; Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association, Inc.; Legal Momentum; Leslye E. Orloff, J.D. Director, National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project, American University Washington College of Law; Lieutenant Carole Germano, Danvers Police Department, Massachusetts; Lutheran immigration and Refugee Service.

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition; Mary Ann Dutton, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Georgetown University; Medical Center Mennonite Central Committee U.S.; Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women; Mountain Crisis Services; Muslim Public Affairs Council; Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence; NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.; National Alliance to End Sexual Violence; National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum; National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; National Association of Evangelicals; National Association of Federal Defenders; National Center for Transgender Equality; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence; National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs; National Coalition on Black Civic Participation; National Congress of American Indians; National Congress of American Indians Task Force on Violence Against Women; National Council of Jewish Women; National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

National Council of La Raza; National Council of Negro Women, Inc.; National Employment Law Project; National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference; National Immigrant Justice Center; National Immigration Forum; National Immigration Law Center; National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild; National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health; National Latino Evangelical Coalition; National Legal Aid & Defender Association; National Network to End Domestic Violence; National Organization for Women Foundation; National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault; National Resource Center on Domestic Violence and the Women of Color Network; National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women; Nawal Ammar, PhD, Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology; NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby; New Sanctuary Coalition of NYC; NewBridges Immigrant Resource Center; Northwest Immigrant Rights Project.

Officer Michael LaRiviere, Salem Police Department, Massachusetts; Paso del Norte Civil Rights Project; Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center; Political Asylum Immigration Representation Project; Public Justice Center; Rachael Rodriguez, Ph.D., Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at Edgewood College; Rainbow Services, Ltd.; Refiigio del Rio Grande; Rhonda Giger, Prosecutor—City of Bothell, WA; Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network; Ross Silverman LLP; Rural Women's Health Project; Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law; Sergeant Inspector Antonio Flores, San Francisco Police Department, California; Service Employees International Union; Sisters of Mercy of the Americas; Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia; Sojourners; South Asian Americans Leading Together; Stephanie J. Nawyn, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, Michigan State University; Supervising Deputy Sheriff Marcus Bruning, St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, Missouri.

Tahirih Justice Center; Tapestri, Inc; The Bridge to Hope; The Episcopal Church; The Immigrant Legal Resource Center; The Kansas/Missouri Dream Alliance; The Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights; The Sentencing Project; The Violence Intervention Program; The William Kellibrew Foundation; TN Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence; UC Davis Immigration Law Clinic; Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations; United Methodist Church; United Migrant Opportunity Services; UnitedWomen.org; U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

VIDA Legal Assistance, Inc.; Virginia Organizing; Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance; Voces Unidas for Justice; Voices of Men; Washington Immigration Defense Group; Washington State Coalition Against; Willow Creek Community Church; Women of Color Network; Women's Refugee Commission; Worker Justice Center of New York; World Evangelical Alliance; World Relief; YWCA USA.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I now yield 1 minute to our distinguished colleague from Illinois, Congresswoman BIGGERT.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I am disappointed in this closed rule for VAWA. I am concerned that the bill, even with the changes made in the manager's amendment, doesn't reflect everything that we've learned over the past 5 years in terms of what works best for victims or prosecutors.

Over the past several months, I sat down with advocates in my district to go section by section through the Senate reauthorization and discussed what works and what doesn't work. They strongly support provisions that would clarify equal treatment for LGBT individuals, bolster enforcement on Native American reservations, and ensure that victims aren't deported simply for reporting domestic abuse. I see no reason to exclude these provisions from a House bill. Our victim service providers on the front lines really just want to know who they can help and that they can help everyone who comes through the front door.

Last night, I offered an amendment that would have modernized the bill's definitions to reflect the input of victim service providers, including special protections for immigrant victims, and clarified that LGBT individuals can be served by VAWA.

I previously worked on the authorization of VAWA, which incorporated good ideas. That authorization was never a partisan issue, and it shouldn't be now.

Madam Speaker, I am disappointed in this closed rule for H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Act of 2012 (VAWA).

I am concerned that the bill, even with changes made in the manager's amendment, doesn't reflect everything we've learned over the last 5 years in terms of what works best for victims or prosecutors.

Over the past several months, I've sat down with advocates in my district to go section-by-section through the Senate reauthorization and discuss what works and what doesn't. They strongly support provisions that would clarify equal treatment for LGBT individuals, bolster enforcement on Native American reservations, and ensure that victims aren't deported simply for reporting domestic abuse. I see no reason to exclude those provisions from a House bill.

Last night, I offered an amendment that would have modernized the bill's definitions to reflect the input of victim service providers, including specific protections for immigrant victims, and clarified that LGBT individuals can be served by VAWA programs in all States. This amendment was rejected.

Let me be clear—no one is suggesting any special class of treatment. This reauthorization should simply clarify the law to reflect what everyone knows about modern society—that anyone can be a victim of domestic violence. It can happen in a same-sex household, on a college campus, or a Native American reservation, and our victim service providers on the front lines just want to know that they can help anyone who comes through the door.

Madam Speaker, we don't need a perfect bill. We need a bill that can provide a solid foundation on which to begin conference negotiations with the Senate. H.R. 4970 fails on this count.

I worked on the previous reauthorizations of VAWA, in 2000 and 2005, which incorporated good ideas from both sides of the aisle. That reauthorization was never a partisan issue then, and it shouldn't be now.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. For so many, this Violence Against Women Act vote is literally a matter of life and death.

One immigrant was abused by her husband, who was a special agent for the Homeland Security Department. He threatened her that she would be deported and separated from her daughter. She sought help anyway at the excellent San Antonio Family Violence Prevention Services, through which she was provided a special visa allowing her to remain here safely.

Another woman in Austin found death. So fearful of being deported, she was eventually killed in broad daylight in front of her two little children.

We have a 2-year backlog for this visa. It is a visa that could help many. It is a visa that was approved almost unanimously in a previous Congress.

Instead of focusing on a victim's visa status, we should be focused on the fight against domestic violence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). The time of the gentleman has expired.

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Instead of focusing on discriminating against some in our community, we should be focused on ensuring that all victims of violence everywhere receive the care and services they need. Let's move forward in that struggle, not take another giant Republican step backward.

Ms. FOXX. I would like to now yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Missouri, Congresswoman HARTZLER.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, H.R. 4970 reauthorizes the Violence Against Women Act for another 5 years, providing important funding for fighting domestic violence and abuse.

When Congress reauthorizes any bill, we must make sure that the bill directs resources towards those it is intended to help and makes the best possible use of taxpayer money. That's what we've done in H.R. 4970 by strengthening accountability and transparency in grant administration to ensure that these dollars go to help the victims, not entrenched government bureaucrats.

I've been a long supporter of the domestic violence shelter in my own hometown. Hope Haven plays an essential role in aiding victims and providing tools for recovery. I've seen the vital work that they do and know that dozens of other organizations like it will benefit from the bill's passage.

This is a bipartisan bill. It's a reauthorization of long-standing provisions that aid women, and I'm hopeful that my colleagues will join me in supporting its worthwhile efforts.

□ 1410

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Madam Speaker, as a point of parliamentary inquiry, I want to make sure that the time is not begun until the gentlelady begins.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. POLIS. Thank you.

I yield to the gentlelady from Texas.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Texas is recognized for 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I thank the gentleman from Colorado, and I sadly rise in opposition to the rule.

I really cry out to ask the question: Who should refuse to help a victim of domestic violence? Who has the right to deny a victim—Native American, immigrant, LGBT community; who has that right?

It is obvious that this legislation is not bipartisan, and it is obvious that there is still a divide. It is obvious that the groups who obviously work with these victims—many whom I have the opportunity of seeing through the eyes of the Houston Area Women's Center—realize that no provider wants to pick and choose.

It is clear that the underlying bill does not work. The Senate bill is what answers the question of these victims who now have been harmed, because what you're saying to an immigrant who is here on a visa, you are saying to them that they have no relief.

I believe this bill will not work.

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

Mr. POLIS. I yield an additional 10 seconds to the gentlelady.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. It really is a question as to whether or not the new included funding for rape kits will actually be able to go to providers and solve the problems of rape kits in places around the Nation.

We need to do this in a bipartisan way. Who will say ''no'' to a victim because they are Native American, they are immigrant, or they are LGBT. Who will say ''no?''

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, this bill takes steps backwards from offering full protections for women and children who suffer unspeakable abuse.

I'm not questioning the intentions, Madam Speaker, of those on the other side; that's not my purpose here. But who are we excluding today? You're either a unifier on the floor or you are a divider. Instead of passing the bipartisan Senate bill that provides protections for women who are victims of abuse, the majority has decided instead to turn women's safety and security into a political fight. It shouldn't be.

According to the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, an average of 24 people per minute

are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner.

The Violence Against Women Act makes great strides. It shouldn't matter if a woman is an immigrant or a member of the LGBT community. I'm against this rule. I'm against the bill. I hope we can come together on a final resolution of this.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. This bill also authorizes a total of $642 billion for defense programs, including $88.5 billion to continue the Afghanistan war, on top of the more than $1.3 trillion we've spent thus far.

It contains dangerous language that would pave the path for a war with Iran. H.R. 4310 says the U.S. should take all necessary measures, including military action, to prevent Iran from having nuclear technology—this, despite the fact that Secretary of Defense Panetta and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have spoken out against a strike in Iran. What's Congress spoiling for another war for?

Now, we've spent trillions of dollars for war to wage violence thousands of miles away, and we've become anesthetized to the violence of war against millions of innocent women, children, and men abroad. It's no wonder that we're grappling with how best to deal with domestic violence.

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

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Imagine if we took a fraction of the trillions of dollars we've spent for war and used it to deal directly with the root causes of domestic violence—spousal abuse, child abuse, violence in the schools, gang violence, gun violence, racial violence, violence against immigrants, violence against gays. If we did that and looked at the root causes, we wouldn't even be arguing about spending money for war. We need to look at the issue of violence in America and do it in a consistent, comprehensive way.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Madam Speaker, as the gentleman from Ohio says, the second bill that's made in order under this rule is H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act, otherwise known as the NDAA.

As we debate this very important bill, let's keep in mind the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families, and in particular those who have given the ultimate sacrifice in defense of American freedom, which includes this deliberative process of freely debating our laws and ideas about the role of government. We could not be here today without the sacrifices of those who've served in the military and helped protect us as a free people.

As James Madison wrote in the Federalist Papers:

> The operations of the Federal Government will be most extensive and important in terms of war and danger.

Our Founding Fathers had a clear view that the primary and central job of the Federal Government was ''to provide for the common defense,'' which is a constitutional mandate. It is not an issue that should divide us or devolve into partisan rancor but unite us as a country that supports our military and provides them with the resources necessary to complete their critically important mission.

Madam Speaker, in a few days, we will be in our districts participating in Memorial Day events. I approach Memorial Day with mixed emotions, as a part of me celebrates the joy and pride of living in this great country where we're all free to participate in a robust public policy debate. I am proud that I live in a meritocracy, where anyone can choose which path to follow and succeed. But Memorial Day also elicits somber thoughts of those who have given their lives in defense of the greatest country in the history of humankind.

While many of our fellow Americans will be celebrating with cookouts and family, I ask that we all pause and think about those families who will have an empty place at their dinner table, those families who still mourn the loss of a loved one and, rather than cooking out, will be visiting our fallen heroes in hallowed grounds across these United States. That's the true purpose of Memorial Day—to pause, remember, and honor those who have given the ultimate sacrifice to preserve all that is great in our country.

So as we return home to our districts, I ask all of my colleagues to keep in mind the spouses, children, and families of the fallen. As President Lincoln stated in his second inaugural address:

> With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the Nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

With that, Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I'd like to inquire as to how much time remains on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado has 7 minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from North Carolina has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN).

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, as I rise today to speak against this flawed Violence Against Women Act that the House is presenting, let me point out this picture. This picture is a picture of Marissa Alexander, a 31-year-old mother of three with a master's degree and no prior convictions, who received a 20-year sentence for firing a warning shot in the air to warn off an attack by her husband. At the time that it occurred, there was a restraining act. Let me point out that this shot did not injure anyone, yet she will be in jail until 2032.

The imbalance in the system is obvious. Just minutes before she fired the shot Marissa's husband told her, ''If I can't have you, no one is going to.'' Sadly, millions of abused women have heard these exact words and not lived to tell about it.

□ 1420

Battered women like Marissa need support and counseling.

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

Mr. POLIS. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Battered women like Marissa need support and counseling so that they don't find themselves in these situations. Jailing them for 30 years is unacceptable.

This is the beginning, not the end. Along with the NAACP and other groups, we will fight to make sure we turn over this horrible ruling and stand up to the legal system that persecutes women who defend themselves. Those women need help, not prison.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama, Congresswoman ROBY.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you so much to the gentlelady from North Carolina.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in favor of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and just want to say, even after VAWA's enactment roughly 8 years ago, one in four women still experience domestic violence during their lifetime. Moreover, more than 2 million adults and 15 million children are exposed to such violence annually.

According to the Alabama Coalition against Domestic Violence and the Alabama National Census Summary, in Alabama there are 834 victims served in one day, 187 hotline calls answered in one day, and 76 unmet requests for services. These numbers are astounding, and something must change.

Organizations have reported that they have been unable to provide services for a variety of reasons: the top three being, there's not enough staff, there's not enough specialized services, and there's not enough available beds or hotel vouchers to provide safe havens for victims and their children.

As an original cosponsor of the Violence Against Women Act, today I stand here supporting the Republican reauthorization. This bill brings greater accountability to the grant administration by ensuring that funding will support and assist victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking, and will not be kept in the pockets of Washington bureaucrats.

Individuals, whether women, men or children, should be able to feel safe in

their homes; and when they are not, should be able to have access to services that allow them to be removed from their abuser.

Congress must put Washington politics aside and take action. I fully support this legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to join me.

Mr. POLIS. I would inquire if the gentlewoman has any remaining speakers.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, we do have other speakers.

Mr. POLIS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I now would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from the State of Washington, a member of our leadership, Congresswoman MCMORRIS RODGERS.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. I want to thank the gentlewoman for her leadership on this important issue.

I rise today on behalf of my mother, my daughter, and every woman in America in strong support of H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization of 2012.

Each year there are over 200,000 victims of sexual assaults; and while these numbers are devastating, since the enactment of the first Violence Against Women Act almost 20 years ago, the annual number of incidents has dramatically fallen, while the reporting rate has risen by 50 percent.

The programs in the legislation are critical to continue the fight for equality and women's rights. The bill we will vote on today makes commonsense reforms to ensure that more money actually benefits victims and is dedicated to eliminating the astounding backlog in rape kit tests.

Additionally, today we have the chance to support vital funding for rape prevention educational programs, youth victim services, and improvements to emergency and transitional housing services for victims.

Since its enactment, the Violence Against Women Act has enjoyed broad bipartisan support. This is not a Republican or Democrat, conservative or liberal issue. Together we are uniformly standing against violence against anyone, particularly women; and I urge all of my colleagues to support their mothers, wives, daughters, neighbors and friends by supporting H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, a victim-centered bill that will extend vital programs that protect against and prevent both physical and mental violence.

Mr. POLIS. I'd like to inquire if the gentlewoman has any remaining speakers.

Ms. FOXX. Yes, Madam Speaker, we have one more.

Mr. POLIS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I'd like to yield now 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from North Carolina for yielding to me, and I rise to support the Violence Against Women Act. I did so when it was reauthorized in 2005, I believe it was, and we're here today in this debate on the rule, not so much the bill.

I come to the floor to raise a point that constantly in the debate in the Judiciary Committee there was an effort to divert the subject matter over to other things, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration, a lot of focus on immigration. And one of the things that's happened to the bill since it left the committee was to change the language, through this manager's amendment, that's essentially deemed passed by the Rules Committee that changes the value of evidence of abuse of, say, a female immigrant who can get a U visa if she has determined as having been victimized, especially sexually victimized. That was a clear and convincing evidence standard.

This rule that's written in by the Rules Committee changes it to the preponderance of the evidence. I support the decision of the Judiciary Committee. It also changes the investigative component of this from USCIS, which are trained investigators. They'll only see the evidence that's offered to them by Federal prosecutors. So I am going to oppose the rule and support the bill.

Mr. POLIS. I thank the gentleman from Iowa. Though we disagree on the bill, we can both agree that this is a terrible rule. And I encourage my colleagues to follow the leadership of the gentleman from Iowa in opposing this rule.

I'd like to inquire of the gentlelady if she has any remaining speakers.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, we are prepared to close.

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

Madam Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to this closed rule to make in order the bipartisan Violence Against Women bill that passed the United States Senate with 68 votes as an amendment offered by Representative CONYERS, Representative MOORE, and Representative LOFGREN. If the House passes that, it will proceed to President Obama's desk.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and defeat the previous question and allow the Senate bill that has passed with a bipartisan majority, that actually expands protections for all women, to be considered by this body.

Here, Madam Speaker, is the face of somebody affected by the Violence Against Women Act from Colorado. Her name is Sara. Sara came to our country illegally. She was brought illegally, unbeknownst to her, by her American husband. Once in the United States, she was abused. She was isolated. She was effectively kept a prisoner in her own house by her husband.

The first time she was violently beaten by her husband was when she went on a walk because her husband claimed that she had disobeyed him. She was trapped in a relationship where she was abused, sexually as well as verbally, for 14 years.

She finally escaped with her son to safe transitional housing called Alternatives to Violence in Loveland, Colorado. Once there, she learned English and obtained temporary legal status through a U visa provided under the Violence Against Women Act.

Today, I'm proud to say, Madam Speaker, she's a United States citizen and works as an advocate for other immigrant victims of domestic abuse.

Stories like Sara are inspiring and reinforce the reason that so many of us feel passionately to join across party lines to ensure that no domestic victim is left unserved.

This Cantor-Adams bill offers us a false choice between weakening and undermining protections in the Violence Against Women Act or maintaining the status quo. The American people understand that a vote for the Cantor-Adams bill is a vote to roll back protections for all domestic and sexual violence victims and puts the safety of our most vulnerable domestic violence victims at risk.

Immigrants, Native Americans, lesbian, gay, and bisexual victims all have historically faced many barriers to reporting sexual violence. But instead of removing those barriers, this bill, under this closed rule, creates new ones.

□ 1430

Lesbian and gay survivors face particular obstacles in accessing the criminal justice system. Lesbian and gay survivors are often reluctant to report abuse, and when they do finally seek assistance, they frequently don't receive the support they need across lifesaving services and resources. Studies tell us that gay and lesbian couples experience domestic violence at roughly the same rates as the general population. It is no surprise that less than one in five gay and lesbian victims of intimate partner violence receives help through a service provider.

This bill fails to provide the same vital protections for gay and lesbian families that have been overwhelmingly approved in the Senate bill. During the Judiciary markup, I offered an amendment to restore these protections, but unfortunately, it was voted down. This closed process prevents the ability of Members of the House to even consider or vote on adding these protections back in. Had the House Republicans allowed amendments on the

floor today, I would have offered two amendments that I offered—along with my colleagues Representative JACKSON LEE, Representative LOFGREN, Representatives DEUTCH and CHU, all who were leaders in the Judiciary markup—which would have eliminated these atrocious provisions from the bill.

Some of the most egregious anti-immigrant provisions would destroy incentives to cooperate with law enforcement. People like Sara, who bravely came forward to report domestic violence, would face deportation after 4 years. Why would somebody come forward and report something if it would ultimately lead to her own deportation?

All women deserve to be protected from domestic violence—even women who have committed crimes, even women who have had civil violations, like violating our immigration laws, even women who are lesbians. All women deserve to be protected by the Violence Against Women Act, and that is what this bill is about. The Senate bill, which passed on a bipartisan basis and included a report from well over a dozen Republican Senators, included these provisions.

Abuse is abuse, whether it occurs against immigrants, whether it occurs against gay and lesbian Americans, or whether it occurs against Native Americans. Yet, under this bill before us, a Native American woman who is living on a reservation and who is raped and abused by a nontribal member lacks protection and remains at risk of serious sexual and physical violence by her abuser. Under this underlying bill, gay and lesbian survivors and victims will struggle to get protective orders or will be turned away from service providers just because of their sexual orientation or gender identities.

Just as alarming, this bill removes protections that currently exist for some of our Nation's most vulnerable populations: battered immigrant spouses, restricting the ability of U visa holders to apply for permanent resident status and forcing them to face deportation.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the bills and to defeat the previous question, and I urge a ''no'' vote on the rule.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. I yield myself the balance of my time.

I agree with my colleague from Colorado. Abuse is abuse, no matter against which person it is, and nothing in this Violence Against Women reauthorization bill prohibits grant recipients from serving all victims of domestic violence, and I am glad to hear my colleague say that.

Madam Speaker, House Republicans want to help women, particularly those who have been victims of violence and abuse, while also being good stewards of limited taxpayer resources. The 2012 Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act accomplishes these goals. In addition, the FY13 National Defense Authorization Act ensures that the men and women in our military have the resources they need while protecting taxpayer investments.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of improved congressional oversight and against special interests by voting in favor of this rule and the underlying bills.

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

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 656 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS OF COLORADO

Strike the first section and insert the following:

Resolved, That at any time after the 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. 4970) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994. 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. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary, 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 S. 1925 as passed by the Senate if offered by Representative Conyers of Michigan, Representative Moore of Wisconsin, or Representative Lofgren of California. 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. 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 information contained herein was provided by the Republican Minority on multiple occasions throughout the 110th and 111th Congresses.)

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 opposition, at least for the moment, 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.''

Because the vote today may look bad for the Republican majority they will 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.

Ms. FOXX. 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. POLIS. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question will be followed by 5-minute votes on adopting the resolution, if ordered, and suspending the rules and passing H.R. 4119.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 235, nays 187, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 254]

YEAS—235

Adams
Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Austria
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bass (NH)
Benishek
Berg
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brooks
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Buerkle
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canseco
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cole
Conaway
Cravaack
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Dreier
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emerson
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Flake
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guinta
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Lamborn
Lance
Landry
Lankford
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCotter
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meehan
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Myrick
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paul
Paulsen
Pearce
Pence
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Quayle
Reed
Rehberg
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Rivera
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross (FL)
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Scalise
Schilling
Schmidt
Schock
Schweikert
Scott (SC)
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stearns
Stivers
Stutzman
Sullivan
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner (NY)
Turner (OH)
Upton
Walberg
Walden
Walsh (IL)
Webster
West
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—187

Ackerman
Altmire
Andrews
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Bass (CA)
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boren
Boswell
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Castor (FL)
Chandler
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke (MI)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Critz
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Deutch
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Fattah
Frank (MA)
Fudge
Garamendi
Gonzalez
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heinrich
Herger
Higgins
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hochul
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kildee
Kind
Kissell
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Luján
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (CT)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Olver
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Pelosi
Peters
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Richmond
Ross (AR)
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell
Sherman
Sires
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stark
Sutton
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Woolsey
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—9

Akin
Burton (IN)
Cassidy
Filner
Labrador
Luetkemeyer
Perlmutter
Slaughter
Young (FL)

□ 1459

Ms. WILSON of Florida, Messrs. TONKO, MURPHY of Connecticut, McINTYRE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. RICHMOND changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall 254, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

(By unanimous consent, Mr. REICHERT was allowed to speak out of order.)

COMMEMORATING NATIONAL PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL DAY AND POLICE WEEK

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, yesterday was National Law Enforcement Memorial Day. This entire week is National Law Enforcement Week.

Last year, we lost 163 police officers killed in the line of duty. So far this year, there have been 40 killed in the line of duty protecting each one of the communities that we represent in this great body, people like Tony Radulescu, a trooper in Washington State, a person who left his home that day with a hug and a kiss from his family expecting him back home again that evening for dinner, men and women in uniform leaving every day to go to work to protect our communities, expecting to return home. Some never do.

It is right; it is proper; it is our duty, Madam Speaker, to, today, pause in this great body and pay tribute to those men and women who have sacrificed their lives for us so that we can all live safely.

I ask for a moment of silence.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members will rise, and the House will observe a moment of silence.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

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.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 235, nays 186, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 255]

YEAS—235

Adams
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Austria
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bass (NH)
Benishek
Berg
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brooks
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Buerkle
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canseco
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cole
Conaway
Cravaack
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Dreier
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emerson
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Flake
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gardner
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guinta
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Heck
Hensarling
Herger
Herrera Beutler
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Lamborn
Lance
Landry
Lankford
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCotter
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meehan
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Myrick
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson

Palazzo
Paul
Paulsen
Pearce
Pence
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Quayle
Reed
Rehberg
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Rivera
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross (FL)
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Scalise
Schilling
Schmidt
Schock
Schweikert
Scott (SC)
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stearns
Stivers
Stutzman
Sullivan
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner (NY)
Turner (OH)
Upton
Walberg
Walden
Walsh (IL)
Webster
West
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—186

Ackerman
Andrews
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Bass (CA)
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Black
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boren
Boswell
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Castor (FL)
Chandler
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke (MI)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Critz
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Deutch
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Fattah
Frank (MA)
Fudge
Garamendi
Gonzalez
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heinrich
Higgins
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hochul
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kildee
Kind
King (IA)
Kissell
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Luján
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (CT)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Olver
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Pelosi
Peters
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Richmond
Ross (AR)
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell
Sherman
Sires
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stark
Sutton
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Woolsey

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—9

Altmire
Burton (IN)
Cassidy
Filner
Gerlach
Labrador
Perlmutter
Slaughter
Yarmuth

□ 1510

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall 255, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

BORDER TUNNEL PREVENTION ACT OF 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4119) to reduce the trafficking of drugs and to prevent human smuggling across the Southwest Border by deterring the construction and use of border tunnels, 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 Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 416, nays 4, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 256]

YEAS—416

Ackerman
Adams
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Amodei
Andrews
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baldwin
Barletta
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bass (CA)
Bass (NH)
Becerra
Benishek
Berg
Berkley
Berman
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boswell
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brooks
Brown (FL)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Buerkle
Burgess
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canseco
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Castor (FL)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chandler
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke (MI)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cravaack
Crawford
Crenshaw
Critz
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Flake
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garamendi
Gardner
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Heck
Heinrich
Hensarling
Herger
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hochul
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly
Kildee
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kissell
Kline
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Landry
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Long
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Marino
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meehan
Meeks
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Mulvaney
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (PA)
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Olver
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quayle
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Rehberg
Reichert
Renacci
Reyes
Ribble
Richardson
Richmond
Rigell
Rivera
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross (AR)
Ross (FL)
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schilling
Schmidt
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (SC)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stark
Stearns
Stivers
Stutzman
Sullivan
Sutton
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Turner (NY)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden
Walsh (IL)
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Webster
Welch
West
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Woolsey
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—4

Amash
Broun (GA)
Paul
Scott (VA)

NOT VOTING—11

Altmire
Boren
Burton (IN)
Cassidy
Filner
Gerlach
Labrador
Perlmutter
Slaughter
Turner (OH)
Yarmuth

□ 1518

Ms. BASS of California and Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall 256, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained earlier today on personal business and therefore unable to be on the House Floor for rollcall votes 253, 254, 255, and 256. Had I been present I would have voted: ''yea'' on rollcall vote 253; ''yea'' on rollcall vote 254; ''yea'' on rollcall vote 255; and ''yea'' on rollcall vote 256.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, I was unable to cast the record votes for rollcalls 250, 251, 252, 255 and 256. Had I been present I would have voted as follows for these measures: H.R. 365, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, No. 250, ''yes''; H.R. 3874, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, No. 251, ''yes''; H.R. 205, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, No. 252, ''yes''; H.R. 656, on Agreeing to the Resolution, No. 255, ''no''; and H.R. 4119, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, No. 256, ''yes.''

□ 1520

PERMISSION TO FILE PRIVILEGED REPORTS

Mr. ADERHOLT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Appropriations have until 6 p.m. on May 25, 2012 to file four privileged reports on the following:

a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and other purposes;

a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes;

a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes;

and a bill making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes.

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

There was no objection.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4348, SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2012, PART II

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, pursuant to Rule XXII, clause 7(c), I hereby announce my attention to offer a motion to instruct on H.R. 4348.

The form of the motion is as follows:

Mr. Rahall moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 4348 be instructed to agree to sections 1528, 20017 (to the extent that such section amends section 5323 of title 49, United States Code, to provide subsection (k) relating to Buy America), 33007, 33008, and 35210 of the Senate amendment.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. CON. RES. 107

Mr. JONES (during consideration of H. Res. 656). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove Mr. GRIJALVA as a cosponsor from H. Con. Res. 107.

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

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 4103

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Congressman DAN BENISHEK be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 4103.

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

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT TO THE MESQUITE LANDS ACT OF 1986

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 2745) to amend the Mesquite Lands Act of 1986 to facilitate implementation of a multispecies habitat conservation plan for the Virgin River in Clark County, Nevada, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 656, I call up the bill (H.R. 4970) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 656, the amendment in the nature of a substitute, recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary, printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in House Report 112–481 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 4970

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 ''Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.
Sec. 2. Table of contents.
Sec. 3. VAWA definitions and grant conditions.
Sec. 4. Accountability provisions.
Sec. 5. Effective date.
TITLE I—ENHANCING JUDICIAL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT TOOLS TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
Sec. 101. STOP grants.
Sec. 102. Grants to encourage arrest policies and enforcement of protection orders.
Sec. 103. Legal assistance for victims.
Sec. 104. Consolidation of grants to support families in the justice system.
Sec. 105. Court-appointed special advocate program.
Sec. 106. Outreach and services to underserved populations grant.
Sec. 107. Culturally specific services grant.
Sec. 108. Reduction in rape kit backlog.
TITLE II—IMPROVING SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING
Sec. 201. Sexual assault services program.
Sec. 202. Rural domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and child abuse enforcement assistance.
Sec. 203. Training and services to end violence against women with disabilities grants.
Sec. 204. Grant for training and services to end violence against women in later life.
TITLE III—SERVICES, PROTECTION, AND JUSTICE FOR YOUNG VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE
Sec. 301. Rape prevention and education grant.
Sec. 302. Creating hope through outreach, options, services, and education for children and youth.
Sec. 303. Grants to combat violent crimes on campuses.
Sec. 304. National Center for Campus Public Safety.
TITLE IV—VIOLENCE REDUCTION PRACTICES
Sec. 401. Study conducted by the centers for disease control and prevention.
Sec. 402. Saving money and reducing tragedies through prevention grants.
TITLE V—STRENGTHENING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM'S RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING
Sec. 501. Consolidation of grants to strengthen the health care system's response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

TITLE VI—SAFE HOMES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING

Sec. 601. Housing protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
Sec. 602. Transitional housing assistance grants for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
Sec. 603. Addressing the housing needs of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

TITLE VII—ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Sec. 701. National Resource Center on Workplace Responses to assist victims of domestic and sexual violence.

TITLE VIII—IMMIGRATION PROVISIONS

Sec. 801. Fraud prevention initiatives.
Sec. 802. Clarification of the requirements applicable to U visas.
Sec. 803. Protections for a fiancée or fiancé of a citizen.
Sec. 804. Regulation of international marriage brokers.
Sec. 805. GAO report.
Sec. 806. Temporary Nature of U Visa Status.
Sec. 807. Annual report on immigration applications made by victims of abuse.
Sec. 808. Protection for children of VAWA self-petitioners.
Sec. 809. Public charge.
Sec. 810. Age-Out Protection for U Visa Applicants.
Sec. 811. Hardship waivers.
Sec. 812. Disclosure of Information for National Security Purpose.
Sec. 813. GAO report on requirements to cooperate with law enforcement officials.
Sec. 814. Consideration of other evidence.

TITLE IX—SAFETY FOR INDIAN WOMEN

Sec. 901. Grants to Indian tribal governments.
Sec. 902. Grants to Indian tribal coalitions.
Sec. 903. Consultation.
Sec. 904. Analysis and research on violence against Indian women.
Sec. 905. Assistant United States attorney domestic violence tribal liaisons.

TITLE X—CRIMINAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 1001. Criminal provisions relating to sexual abuse.
Sec. 1002. Sexual abuse in custodial settings.
Sec. 1003. Criminal provision relating to stalking, including cyberstalking.
Sec. 1004. Amendments to the Federal assault statute.
Sec. 1005. Mandatory minimum sentence.

SEC. 3. VAWA DEFINITIONS AND GRANT CONDITIONS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Subsection (a) of section 40002 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''to an unemancipated minor'' after ''serious harm'';

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''an organization'' and inserting ''a nonprofit, nongovernmental, or tribal organization that serves a specific geographic community'';

(3) in paragraph (6) by inserting ''or intimate partner'' after ''former spouse'' and after ''as a spouse'';

(4) by amending paragraph (16) to read as follows:

''(16) LEGAL ASSISTANCE.—The term 'legal assistance'—

''(A) includes assistance to adult and youth victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in—

''(i) family, tribal, territorial, immigration, employment, administrative agency, housing matters, campus administrative or protection or stay away order proceedings, and other similar matters; and

''(ii) criminal justice investigations, prosecutions and post-trial matters (including sentencing, parole, and probation) that impact the victim's safety and privacy; and

''(B) may include services and assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who are also victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons as defined by section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102);

except that intake or referral, without other action, does not constitute legal assistance.''.

(5) by amending paragraph (18) to read as follows:

''(18) PERSONALLY IDENTIFYING INFORMATION OR PERSONAL INFORMATION.—The term 'personally identifying information' or 'personal information' means individually identifying information for or about an individual, including information likely to disclose the location of a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, regardless of whether the information is encoded, encrypted, hashed, or otherwise protected, including—

''(A) a first and last name;

''(B) a home or other physical address;

''(C) contact information (including a postal, e-mail or Internet protocol address, or telephone or facsimile number);

''(D) a social security number, driver license number, passport number, or student identification number; and

''(E) any other information, including date of birth, racial or ethnic background, or religious affiliation, that would serve to identify any individual.'';

(6) in paragraph (19), by striking ''services'' and inserting ''assistance'';

(7) in paragraph (21)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''or'' after the semicolon;

(B) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by striking the period and inserting ''; or''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(C) any federally recognized Indian tribe.'';

(8) in paragraph (22)—

(A) by striking ''52'' and inserting ''57''; and

(B) by striking ''150,000'' and inserting ''250,000'';

(9) by amending paragraph (23) to read as follows:

''(23) SEXUAL ASSAULT.—The term 'sexual assault' means any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.'';

(10) by amending paragraph (33) to read as follows:

''(33) UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS.—The term 'underserved populations' means populations who face barriers to accessing and using victim services, and includes populations underserved because of geographic location or religion, underserved racial and ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age), and any other population determined to be underserved by the Attorney General or the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as appropriate.'';

(11) by amending paragraph (37) to read as follows:

''(37) YOUTH.—The term 'youth' means a person who is 11 to 24 years of age.'';

(12) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(38) ALASKA NATIVE VILLAGE.—The term 'Alaska Native village' has the same meaning given such term in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

''(39) CHILD.—The term 'child' means a person who is under 11 years of age.

''(40) CULTURALLY SPECIFIC.—The term 'culturally specific' (except when used as part of the term 'culturally specific services') means primarily composed of racial and ethnic minority groups (as defined in section 1707(g) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300u–6(g))).

''(41) CULTURALLY SPECIFIC SERVICES.—The term 'culturally specific services' means community-based services and resources that are culturally relevant and linguistically specific to culturally specific communities.

''(42) HOMELESS, HOMELESS INDIVIDUAL, HOMELESS PERSON.—The terms 'homeless', 'homeless individual', and 'homeless person'—

''(A) mean an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and

''(B) includes—

''(i) an individual who—

''(I) is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;

''(II) is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or campground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

''(III) is living in an emergency or transitional shelter;

''(IV) is abandoned in a hospital; or

''(V) is awaiting foster care placement;

''(ii) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or

''(iii) migratory children (as defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; 20 U.S.C. 6399) who qualify as homeless under this section because the children are living in circumstances described in this paragraph.

''(43) POPULATION SPECIFIC ORGANIZATION.—The term 'population specific organization' means a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that primarily serves members of a specific underserved population and has demonstrated experience and expertise providing targeted services to members of that specific underserved population.

''(44) POPULATION SPECIFIC SERVICES.—The term 'population specific services' means victim services that—

''(A) address the safety, health, economic, legal, housing, workplace, immigration, confidentiality, or other needs of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and

''(B) are designed primarily for, and are targeted to, a specific underserved population.

''(45) RAPE CRISIS CENTER.—The term 'rape crisis center' means—

''(A) a nonprofit, nongovernmental, or tribal organization that provides intervention and related assistance, as specified in section 41601(b)(2)(C), to victims of sexual assault without regard to the age of the victims; or

''(B) a governmental entity that—

''(i) is located in a State other than a Territory;

''(ii) provides intervention and related assistance, as specified in section 41601(b)(2)(C), to victims of sexual assault without regard to the age of the victims;

''(iii) is not a law enforcement agency or other entity that is part of the criminal justice system; and

''(iv) offers a level of confidentiality to victims that is comparable to a nonprofit entity that provides similar victim services.

''(46) SEX TRAFFICKING.—The term 'sex trafficking' means any conduct proscribed by section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, whether or not the conduct occurs in interstate or foreign commerce or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

''(47) TRIBAL COALITION.—The term 'tribal coalition' means an established nonprofit, nongovernmental Indian organization, Alaska Native organization, or a Native Hawaiian organization that—

''(A) provides education, support, and technical assistance to member Indian service providers in a manner that enables those member providers to establish and maintain culturally appropriate services, including shelter and rape

crisis services, designed to assist Indian women and the dependents of those women who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

''(B) is comprised of board and general members that are representative of—

''(i) the member service providers described in subparagraph (A); and

''(ii) the tribal communities in which the services are being provided.

''(48) UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The term 'unit of local government' means any city, county, township, town, borough, parish, village, or other general purpose political subdivision of a State.

''(49) VICTIM SERVICES.—The term 'victim services'—

''(A) means services provided to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including telephonic or web-based hotlines, legal advocacy, economic advocacy, emergency and transitional shelter, accompaniment and advocacy through medical, civil or criminal justice, immigration, and social support systems, crisis intervention, short-term individual and group support services, information and referrals, culturally specific services, population specific services, and other related supportive services; and

''(B) may include services and assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who are also victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons as defined by section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

''(50) VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDER.—The term 'victim service provider' means a nonprofit, nongovernmental or tribal organization or rape crisis center, including a State sexual assault coalition or tribal coalition, that—

''(A) assists domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking victims, including domestic violence shelters, faith-based organizations, and other organizations; and

''(B) has a documented history of effective work concerning domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.''; and

(13) by striking paragraphs (17), (29), and (36), and then reordering the remaining paragraphs of such subsection (including the paragraphs added by paragraph (12) of this subsection) in alphabetical order based on the headings of such paragraphs, and renumbering such paragraphs as so reordered.

(b) GRANTS CONDITIONS.—Subsection (b) of section 40002 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by amending clauses (i) and (ii) to read as follows:

''(i) disclose, reveal, or release any personally identifying information or individual information collected in connection with services requested, utilized, or denied through grantees' and subgrantees' programs, regardless of whether the information has been encoded, encrypted, hashed, or otherwise protected; or

''(ii) disclose, reveal, or release individual client information without the informed, written, reasonably time-limited consent of the person (or in the case of an unemancipated minor, the minor and the parent or guardian or in the case of legal incapacity, a court-appointed guardian) about whom information is sought, whether for this program or any other Federal, State, tribal, or territorial grant program, except that—

''(I) consent for release may not be given by the abuser of the minor, incapacitated person, or the abuser of the other parent of the minor; and

''(II) if a minor or a person with a legally appointed guardian is permitted by law to receive services without the parent's or guardian's consent, such minor or person with a guardian may release information without additional consent.'';

(B) by amending subparagraph (D), to read as follows:

''(D) INFORMATION SHARING.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Grantees and subgrantees may share—

''(I) nonpersonally identifying data in the aggregate regarding services to their clients and nonpersonally identifying demographic information in order to comply with Federal, State, tribal, or territorial reporting, evaluation, or data collection requirements;

''(II) court-generated information and law enforcement-generated information contained in secure, governmental registries for protection order enforcement purposes; and

''(III) law enforcement-generated and prosecution-generated information necessary for law enforcement, intelligence, national security, or prosecution purposes.

''(ii) LIMITATIONS.—Grantees and subgrantees may not—

''(I) require an adult, youth, or child victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to provide a consent to release his or her personally identifying information as a condition of eligibility for the services provided by the grantee or subgrantee; or

''(II) share any personally identifying information in order to comply with Federal reporting, evaluation, or data collection requirements, whether for this program or any other Federal grant program.'';

(C) by redesignating subparagraph (E) as subparagraph (F);

(D) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following:

''(E) STATUTORILY MANDATED REPORTS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT.—Nothing in this paragraph prohibits a grantee or subgrantee from reporting suspected abuse or neglect, as those terms are defined by law, when specifically mandated by the State or tribe involved.''; and

(E) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(G) CONFIDENTIALITY ASSESSMENT AND ASSURANCES.—Grantees and subgrantees shall certify their compliance with the confidentiality and privacy provisions required under this section.'';

(2) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

''(3) APPROVED ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out the activities under this title, grantees and subgrantees may collaborate with and provide information to Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial public officials and agencies to develop and implement policies, and develop and promote State, local, or tribal legislation or model codes, designed to reduce or eliminate domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.'';

(3) in paragraph (7), by inserting at the end the following:

''Final reports of such evaluations shall be made publically available on the website of the disbursing agency.''; and

(4) by inserting after paragraph (11) the following:

''(12) DELIVERY OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE.—Any grantee or subgrantee providing legal assistance with funds awarded under this title shall comply with the eligibility requirements in section 1201(d) of the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–6(d)).

''(13) CIVIL RIGHTS.—

''(A) NONDISCRIMINATION.—No person in any State shall on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability be denied the assistance of, or excluded from receiving services from, a grantee under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available under the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (title IV of Public Law 103–322; 108 Stat. 1902), the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (division B of Public Law 106–386; 114 Stat. 1491), the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (title IX of Public Law 109–162; 119 Stat. 3080), the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, or any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, and other assistance administered by the Office on Violence Against Women.

''(B) REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall prevent consideration of an individual's gender for purposes of a program or activity described in subparagraph (A) if the grantee involved determines that gender segregation or gender-specific programming is necessary to the essential operation of such program or activity. In such a case, alternative reasonable accommodations are sufficient to meet the requirements of this paragraph.

''(C) APPLICATION.—The provisions of paragraphs (2) through (4) of section 809(c) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3789d(c)) shall apply to violations of subparagraph (A).

''(D) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed, interpreted, or applied to supplant, displace, preempt, or otherwise diminish the responsibilities and liabilities of grantees under other Federal or State civil rights law, whether statutory or common.''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (14043e–2(6)) is amended to read as follows:

''(6) the terms 'homeless', 'homeless individual', and 'homeless person' have the meanings given such terms in section 40002(a);''.

SEC. 4. ACCOUNTABILITY PROVISIONS.

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR DOJ GRANT APPLICANTS TO INCLUDE CERTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT FEDERAL GRANTS IN DOJ GRANT APPLICATIONS.—Each applicant for a grant from the Department of Justice shall submit, as part of the application for the grant, the following information:

(1) A list of each Federal grant the applicant applied for during the one-year period preceding the date of submission of the application.

(2) A list of each Federal grant the applicant received during the five-year period preceding the date of submission of the application.

(b) ENHANCING GRANT EFFICIENCY AND COORDINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall, to the greatest extent practicable, take actions to further the coordination of the administration of grants within the Department of Justice to increase the efficiency of such administration.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on the actions taken by the Attorney General under paragraph (1) and the progress of such actions in achieving coordination described in such paragraph.

(c) REQUIRING OFFICE OF AUDIT, ASSESSMENT, AND MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS TO APPLY TO VAWA GRANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 109(b) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2), the following new paragraph:

''(3) Any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available under the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (title IV of Public Law 103–322; 108 Stat. 1902), the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (division B of Public Law 106–386; 114 Stat. 1491), the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (title IX of Public Law 109–162; 119 Stat. 3080), the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, or any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, and other assistance administered by the Office on Violence Against Women.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to grant periods beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) VAWA GRANT ACCOUNTABILITY.—Section 40002 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) ACCOUNTABILITY.—All grants awarded under this title shall be subject to the following accountability provisions:

''(1) AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—Beginning in fiscal year 2013, and in each fiscal year thereafter, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice or the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services, as applicable, shall conduct an audit of not fewer than 10 percent of all grantees under this title to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds by such grantees.

''(2) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—A grantee described in paragraph (1) that is found by the Inspector General of the Department of Justice or the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services, as applicable, to have an unresolved audit finding (as defined in paragraph (5)) shall not be eligible to receive grant funds under this title during the 2 fiscal years beginning after the 12-month period described in such paragraph.

''(3) REIMBURSEMENT.—If an entity is awarded grant funds under this title during any period in which the entity is prohibited from receiving funds under paragraph (2), the head of the Federal agency administering a grant program under this title shall—

''(A) deposit into the General Fund of the Treasury an amount equal to the grant funds that were improperly awarded to the grantee; and

''(B) seek to recoup the costs of the repayment to the Fund from the entity that was erroneously awarded such grant funds.

''(4) UNRESOLVED AUDIT FINDING DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'unresolved audit finding' means, with respect to a grantee described in paragraph (1), an audit report finding, statement, or recommendation by the Inspector General of the Department of Justice or the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Service, as applicable, that the grantee has utilized grant funds for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost that is not closed or resolved within 12 months from the date of an initial notification of the finding, statement, or recommendation.

''(5) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'nonprofit organization' means an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

''(B) PROHIBITION.—The Attorney General shall not award a grant under any grant program under this title to a nonprofit organization that holds money in offshore accounts for the purpose of avoiding paying the tax described in section 511(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(6) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Unless otherwise explicitly provided in authorizing legislation, not more than 5.0 percent of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under this title may be used by the Attorney General for salaries and administrative expenses of the Office on Violence Against Women.

''(7) CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.—

''(A) LIMITATION.—No amounts authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice or Department of Health and Human Services under this title may be used by the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, or by any individual or organization awarded funds under this title, to host or support any expenditure for conferences, unless in the case of the Department of Justice, the Deputy Attorney General or the appropriate Assistant Attorney General, or in the case of the Department of Health and Human Services the Deputy Secretary, provides prior written authorization that the funds may be expended to host or support any expenditure for such a conference.

''(B) WRITTEN APPROVAL.—Written authorization under subparagraph (A) shall include a written estimate of all costs associated with the conference, including the cost of all food and beverages, audio/visual equipment, honoraria for speakers, and any entertainment.

''(C) REPORT.—The Deputy Attorney General and Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit an annual report to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives on all conference expenditures approved and denied during the fiscal year for which the report is submitted.

''(8) PROHIBITION ON LOBBYING ACTIVITY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Amounts authorized to be appropriated under this title may not be utilized by any grantee or subgrantee to lobby any representative of the Federal Government (including the Department of Justice) or a State, local, or tribal government regarding the award of grant funding.

''(B) PENALTY.—If the Attorney General or the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as applicable determines that any grantee or subgrantee receiving funds under this title has violated subparagraph (A), the Attorney General or the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as applicable, shall—

''(i) require the grantee or subgrantee to repay such funds in full; and

''(ii) prohibit the grantee or subgrantee from receiving any funds under this title for not less than 5 years.

''(9) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of the enactment of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs, the Director of the Office on Violence Against Women, and the Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Services shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a certification for such year that—

''(A) all audits issued by the Office of the Inspector General under paragraph (1) have been completed and reviewed by the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs;

''(B) all mandatory exclusions required under paragraph (2) have been issued;

''(C) all reimbursements required under paragraph (3) have been made; and

''(D) includes a list of any grantees and subgrantees excluded during the previous year under paragraph (2).''.

(e) TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR VAWA GRANTEES.—Section 40002 of the Violence Against Women Act 0f 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925) is further amended—

(1) in the heading, by striking ''***AND GRANT PROVISIONS"*** and inserting ''***, GRANT PROVISIONS, AND TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR VAWA GRANTEES***''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR VAWA GRANTEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General and Secretary of Health and Human Services, as applicable, shall—

''(A) develop standards, protocols, and sample tools and forms to provide guidance to grantees and subgrantees under any program or activity described in paragraph (2) regarding financial recordkeeping and accounting practices required of such grantees and subgrantees as recipients of funds from the disbursing agency;

''(B) provide training to such grantees and subgrantees regarding such standards, protocols, and sample tools and forms; and

''(C) publish on the public Internet website of the Office of Violence Against Women information to assist such grantees and subgrantees with compliance with such standards, protocols, and sample tools and forms.

''(2) VAWA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.—For purposes of paragraph (1), a program or activity described in this paragraph is any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available under this title, the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (division B of Public Law 106–386; 114 Stat. 1491), the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (title IX of Public Law 109–162; 119 Stat. 3080), the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, or any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, and other assistance administered by the Office on Violence Against Women.''.

SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

Except as otherwise specifically provided in this Act, the provisions of titles I, II, III, IV, VII, and sections 3, 602, 901, and 902 of this Act shall not take effect until the first day of the fiscal year following the date of enactment of this Act.

TITLE I—ENHANCING JUDICIAL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT TOOLS TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

SEC. 101. STOP GRANTS.

(a) STOP GRANTS.—Part T of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3711 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 2001(b) (42 U.S.C. 3796gg(b)), as amended by paragraph (2)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''equipment'' and inserting ''resources''; and

(ii) by inserting ''for the protection and safety of victims,'' before ''and specifically,'';

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''sexual assault'' and all that follows through ''dating violence'' and inserting ''domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking'';

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking ''sexual assault and domestic violence'' and inserting ''domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking'';

(D) in paragraph (3), by striking ''sexual assault and domestic violence'' and inserting ''domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, as well as the appropriate treatment of victims'';

(E) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by inserting '', classifying,'' after ''identifying''; and

(ii) by striking ''sexual assault and domestic violence'' and inserting ''domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking'';

(F) in paragraph (5)—

(i) by inserting ''and legal assistance'' after ''victim services'';

(ii) by striking ''sexual assault and domestic violence'' and inserting ''domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking''; and

(iii) by striking ''including crimes'' and all that follows and inserting ''including crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking;'';

(G) by striking paragraph (6) and redesignating paragraphs (7) through (14) as paragraphs (6) through (13), respectively;

(H) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated by subparagraph (G), by striking ''sexual assault and domestic violence'' and inserting ''domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking'';

(I) in paragraph (7), as so redesignated by subparagraph (G), by striking ''and dating violence'' and inserting ''dating violence, and stalking'';

(J) in paragraph (9), as so redesignated by subparagraph (G)—

(i) by striking ''domestic violence or sexual assault'' and inserting ''domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking''; and

(ii) by striking ''such violence or assault'' and inserting ''such violence, assault, or stalking'';

(K) in paragraph (12), as so redesignated by subparagraph (G)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''triage protocols to ensure that dangerous or potentially lethal cases are identified and prioritized'' and inserting ''the use of evidence-based indicators to assess the risk of domestic and dating violence homicide and prioritize dangerous or potentially lethal cases''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(L) in paragraph (13), as so redesignated by subparagraph (G)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking ''to provide'' and inserting ''providing'';

(II) by striking ''nonprofit nongovernmental''; and

(III) by striking the comma after ''local governments'';

(ii) by inserting ''and'' after the semicolon in subparagraph (B); and

(iii) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (C) and inserting a semicolon;

(M) by inserting after paragraph (13), as so redesignated by subparagraph (G), the following:

''(14) developing and promoting State, local, or tribal legislation and policies that enhance best practices for responding to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking;

''(15) developing, implementing, or enhancing Sexual Assault Response Teams, or other similar coordinated community responses to sexual assault;

''(16) developing and strengthening policies, protocols, best practices, and training for law enforcement agencies and prosecutors relating to the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases and the appropriate treatment of victims;

''(17) developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing sexual assault against men, women, and youth in correctional and detention settings;

''(18) identifying and conducting inventories of backlogs of sexual assault evidence collection kits and developing protocols and policies for responding to and addressing such backlogs, including protocols and policies for notifying and involving victims; and

''(19) with not more than 5 percent of the total amount allocated to a State for this part, developing, enhancing, or strengthening prevention and educational programming to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.''; and

(N) in the flush text at the end, by striking ''paragraph (14)'' and inserting ''paragraph (13)'';

(2) in section 2007 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–1)—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''nonprofit nongovernmental victim services programs'' and inserting ''victim service providers'';

(B) in subsection (b)(6), by striking ''(not including populations of Indian tribes)'';

(C) in subsection (c)—

(i) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

''(2) grantees and subgrantees shall develop a plan for implementation and may consult and coordinate with—

''(A) the State sexual assault coalition;

''(B) the State domestic violence coalition;

''(C) the law enforcement entities within the State;

''(D) prosecution offices;

''(E) State and local courts;

''(F) tribal governments or tribal coalitions in those States with State or federally recognized Indian tribes;

''(G) representatives from underserved populations;

''(H) victim service providers;

''(I) population specific organizations; and

''(J) other entities that the State or the Attorney General identifies as necessary for the planning process;'';

(ii) by redesignating paragraph (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively;

(iii) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) grantees shall coordinate the State implementation plan described in paragraph (2) with the State plans described in section 307 of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 U.S.C. 10407) and the plans described in the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10601 et seq.) and section 393A of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280b–1b); and''; and

(iv) in paragraph (4), as so redesignated by clause (ii)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''and not less than 25 percent shall be allocated for prosecutors'';

(II) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (D) and (E);

(III) by inserting after subparagraph (A), the following:

''(B) not less than 25 percent shall be allocated for prosecutors;

''(C) for each fiscal year beginning on or after the date that is 2 years after the date of enactment of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, not less than 20 percent shall be allocated for programs or projects that meaningfully address sexual assault, including stranger rape, acquaintance rape, alcohol or drug-facilitated rape, and rape within the context of an intimate partner relationship;''; and

(IV) in subparagraph (E), as so redesignated by subclause (II), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period;

(D) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

''(d) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—An application for a grant under this part shall include—

''(1) the certifications of qualification required under subsection (c);

''(2) proof of compliance with the requirements for the payment of forensic medical exams and judicial notification, described in section 2010;

''(3) proof of compliance with the requirements for paying fees and costs relating to domestic violence and protection order cases described in section 2011;

''(4) proof of compliance with the requirements prohibiting polygraph examinations of victims of sexual assault described in section 2013;

''(5) an implementation plan required under subsection (i); and

''(6) any other documentation that the Attorney General may require.'';

(E) in subsection (e)—

(i) in paragraph (2)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''domestic violence and sexual assault'' and inserting ''domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking''; and

(II) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''linguistically and''; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) CONDITIONS.—In disbursing grants under this part, the Attorney General may impose reasonable conditions on grant awards disbursed after the date of enactment of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012 to ensure that the States meet statutory, regulatory, and other programs requirements.'';

(F) in subsection (f), by striking the period at the end and inserting '', except that, for purposes of this subsection, the costs of the projects for victim services or tribes for which there is an exemption under section 40002(b)(1) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925(b)(1)) shall not count toward the total costs of the projects.''; and

(G) by adding at the end the following:

''(i) IMPLEMENTATION PLANS.—A State applying for a grant under this part shall—

''(1) develop an implementation plan in consultation with representatives of the entities listed in subsection (c)(2), that identifies how the State will use the funds awarded under this part; and

''(2) submit to the Attorney General as part of the application submitted in accordance with subsection (d)—

''(A) the implementation plan developed under paragraph (1);

''(B) documentation from each member of the planning committee with respect to the member's participation in the planning process;

''(C) documentation from the prosecution, law enforcement, court, and victim services programs to be assisted, describing—

''(i) the need for the grant funds;

''(ii) the intended use of the grant funds;

''(iii) the expected result of the grant funds; and

''(iv) the demographic characteristics of the populations to be served, including age, disability, race, ethnicity, and language background;

''(D) a description of how the State will ensure that any subgrantees will consult with victim service providers during the course of developing their grant applications to ensure that the proposed activities are designed to promote the safety, confidentiality, and economic independence of victims;

''(E) demographic data on the distribution of underserved populations within the State and a description of how the State will meet the needs of underserved populations, including the minimum allocation for population specific services required under subsection (c)(4)(C);

''(F) a description of how the State plans to meet the requirements pursuant to regulations issued under subsection (e)(2);

''(G) goals and objectives for reducing domestic and dating violence-related homicides within the State; and

''(H) any other information requested by the Attorney General.

''(j) REALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—A State may use any returned or remaining funds for any authorized purpose under this part if—

''(1) funds from a subgrant awarded under this part are returned to the State; or

''(2) the State does not receive sufficient eligible applications to award the full funding within the allocations under subsection (c)(4).'';

(3) in section 2010 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–4)—

(A) in subsection (a), by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A State, Indian tribal government, or unit of local government shall not be entitled to funds under this subchapter unless the State, Indian tribal government, unit of local government, or another governmental entity—

''(A) incurs the full out-of-pocket cost of forensic medical exams described in subsection (b) for victims of sexual assault; and

''(B) coordinates with health care providers in the region to notify victims of sexual assault of the availability of rape exams at no cost to the victims.'';

(B) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''or'' after the semicolon;

(ii) in paragraph (2), by striking ''; or'' and inserting a period; and

(iii) by striking paragraph (3);

(C) in subsection (c), by striking '', except that such funds'' and all that follows and inserting a period; and

(D) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

''(d) NONCOOPERATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—To be in compliance with this section, a State, Indian tribal government, or unit of local government shall comply with subsection (b) without regard to whether the

victim participates in the criminal justice system or cooperates with law enforcement.

''(2) COMPLIANCE PERIOD.—States, territories, and Indian tribal governments shall have 3 years from the date of enactment of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012 to come into compliance with this subsection.''; and

(4) in section 2011(a)(1) (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–5(a)(1))—

(A) by inserting ''modification, enforcement, dismissal,'' after ''registration,'' each place it appears; and

(B) by striking ''domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault'' and inserting ''domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 1001(a)(18) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3793(a)(18)), is amended by striking ''$225,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''$222,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017''.

SEC. 102. GRANTS TO ENCOURAGE ARREST POLICIES AND ENFORCEMENT OF PROTECTION ORDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part U of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796hh et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 2101 (42 U.S.C. 3796hh)—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''States,'' and all that follows through ''units of local government'' and inserting ''grantees'';

(ii) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''and enforcement of protection orders across State and tribal lines'' before the period;

(iii) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and training in police departments to improve tracking of cases'' and inserting ''data collection systems, and training in police departments to improve tracking of cases and classification of complaints'';

(iv) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''and provide the appropriate training and education about domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking'' after ''computer tracking systems'';

(v) in paragraph (5), by inserting ''and other victim services'' after ''legal advocacy service programs'';

(vi) in paragraph (6), by striking ''judges'' and inserting ''Federal, State, tribal, territorial, and local judges, and court-based and court-related personnel'';

(vii) in paragraph (8), by striking ''and sexual assault'' and inserting '', dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking'';

(viii) in paragraph (10), by striking ''non-profit, non-governmental victim services organizations,'' and inserting ''victim service providers, population specific organizations,''; and

(ix) by adding at the end the following:

''(14) To develop and implement training programs for prosecutors and other prosecution-related personnel regarding best practices to ensure offender accountability, victim safety, and victim consultation in cases involving domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

''(15) To develop or strengthen policies, protocols, and training for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and the judiciary in recognizing, investigating, and prosecuting instances of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

''(16) To develop and promote State, local, or tribal legislation and policies that enhance best practices for responding to the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including the appropriate treatment of victims.

''(17) To develop, implement, or enhance sexual assault nurse examiner programs or sexual assault forensic examiner programs, including the hiring and training of such examiners.

''(18) To develop, implement, or enhance Sexual Assault Response Teams or similar coordinated community responses to sexual assault.

''(19) To develop and strengthen policies, protocols, and training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors regarding the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases and the appropriate treatment of victims of sexual assault.

''(20) To provide the following human immunodeficiency virus services for victims of sexual assault:

''(A) Testing.

''(B) Counseling.

''(C) Prophylaxis.

''(21) To identify and inventory backlogs of sexual assault evidence collection kits and to develop protocols for responding to and addressing such backlogs, including policies and protocols for notifying and involving victims.

''(22) To develop multidisciplinary high-risk teams focusing on reducing domestic violence and dating violence homicides by—

''(A) using evidence-based indicators to assess the risk of homicide and link high-risk victims to immediate crisis intervention services;

''(B) identifying and managing high-risk offenders; and

''(C) providing ongoing victim advocacy and referrals to comprehensive services including legal, housing, health care, and economic assistance.'';

(B) in subsection (c)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting ''except for a court,'' before ''certify''; and

(II) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively, and adjusting the margin accordingly;

(ii) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''except for a court,'' before ''demonstrate'';

(iii) in paragraph (4)—

(I) by inserting ''modification, enforcement, dismissal,'' after ''registration,'' each place it appears;

(II) by inserting ''dating violence,'' after ''domestic violence,''; and

(III) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iv) in paragraph (5)—

(I) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking '', not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this section,'';

(II) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively, and adjusting the margin accordingly;

(III) in clause (ii), as redesignated by subclause (II) of this clause, by striking ''subparagraph (A)'' and inserting ''clause (i)''; and

(IV) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and'';

(v) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (5), as amended by this subparagraph, as subparagraphs (A) through (E), respectively, and adjusting the margin accordingly;

(vi) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), as redesignated by clause (v) of this subparagraph—

(I) by striking the second comma; and

(II) by striking ''grantees are States'' and inserting the following: ''grantees are—

''(1) States''; and

(vii) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) a State, tribal, or territorial domestic violence or sexual assault coalition or a victim service provider that partners with a State, Indian tribal government, or unit of local government that certifies that the State, Indian tribal government, or unit of local government meets the requirements under paragraph (1).'';

(C) in subsection (d)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting '', policy,'' after ''law''; and

(II) in subparagraph (A), by inserting ''and the defendant is in custody or has been served with the information or indictment'' before the semicolon; and

(ii) in paragraph (2), by striking ''it'' and inserting ''its''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(f) ALLOCATION FOR TRIBAL COALITIONS.—Of the amounts appropriated for purposes of this part for each fiscal year, not less than 5 percent shall be available for grants under section 2001(d) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg(d)).

''(g) ALLOCATION FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT.—Of the amounts appropriated for purposes of this part for each fiscal year, not less than 25 percent shall be available for projects that address sexual assault, including stranger rape, acquaintance rape, alcohol or drug-facilitated rape, and rape within the context of an intimate partner relationship.''; and

(2) in section 2102(a) (42 U.S.C. 3796hh–1(a))—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''court,'' after ''tribal government,''; and

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking ''nonprofit, private sexual assault and domestic violence programs'' and inserting ''victim service providers and, as appropriate, population specific organizations''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 1001(a)(19) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3793(a)(19)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''$75,000,000'' and all that follows through ''2011'' and inserting ''$73,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017''; and

(2) by striking the second period.

SEC. 103. LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS.

Section 1201 of the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–6) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking ''arising as a consequence of'' and inserting ''relating to or arising out of''; and

(B) in the second sentence, by inserting ''or arising out of'' after ''relating to'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the heading, by inserting ''AND GRANT CONDITIONS'' after ''DEFINITIONS''; and

(B) by inserting ''and grant conditions'' after ''definitions'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''victim services organizations'' and inserting ''victim service providers''; and

(B) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

''(3) to implement, expand, and establish efforts and projects to provide competent, supervised pro bono legal assistance for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.'';

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''subsection (c) has completed'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''this section—''

''(A) has demonstrated expertise in providing legal assistance or advocacy to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking in the targeted population; or

''(B)(i) is partnered with an entity or person that has demonstrated expertise described in subparagraph (A); and

''(ii) has completed, or will complete, training in connection with domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual assault and related legal issues, including training on evidence-based risk factors for domestic and dating violence homicide;''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''stalking organization'' and inserting ''stalking victim service provider''; and

(5) in subsection (f)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''this section'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''this section $57,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017.''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) Of the amount made available under this subsection in each fiscal year, not more than 10 percent may be used for purposes described in subsection (c)(3).''.

SEC. 104. CONSOLIDATION OF GRANTS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of division B of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (Public Law 106–386; 114 Stat. 1509) is amended by striking the section preceding section 1302 (42 U.S.C. 10420), as amended by section 306 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–162; 119 Stat. 3016), and inserting the following:

''SEC. 1301. COURT TRAINING AND SUPERVISED VISITATION IMPROVEMENTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General may make grants to States, units of local government, courts (including juvenile courts), Indian tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, legal services providers, and victim services providers to improve the response of all aspects of the civil and criminal justice system to families with a history of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or in cases involving allegations of child sexual abuse.

''(b) USE OF FUNDS.—A grant under this section may be used to—

''(1) provide supervised visitation and safe visitation exchange of children and youth by and between parents in situations involving domestic violence, dating violence, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, or stalking;

''(2) develop and promote State, local, and tribal legislation, policies, and best practices for improving civil and criminal court functions, responses, practices, and procedures in cases involving a history of domestic violence or sexual assault, or in cases involving allegations of child sexual abuse, including cases in which the victim proceeds pro se;

''(3) educate court-based and court-related personnel (including custody evaluators and guardians ad litem) and child protective services workers on the dynamics of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including information on perpetrator behavior, evidence-based risk factors for domestic and dating violence homicide, and on issues relating to the needs of victims, including safety, security, privacy, and confidentiality, including cases in which the victim proceeds pro se;

''(4) provide adequate resources in juvenile court matters to respond to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault (including child sexual abuse), and stalking and ensure necessary services dealing with the physical health and mental health of victims are available;

''(5) enable courts or court-based or court-related programs to develop or enhance—

''(A) court infrastructure (such as specialized courts, consolidated courts, dockets, intake centers, or interpreter services);

''(B) community-based initiatives within the court system (such as court watch programs, victim assistants, pro se victim assistance programs, or community-based supplementary services);

''(C) offender management, monitoring, and accountability programs;

''(D) safe and confidential information-storage and information-sharing databases within and between court systems;

''(E) education and outreach programs to improve community access, including enhanced access for underserved populations; and

''(F) other projects likely to improve court responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking;

''(6) collect data and provide training and technical assistance, including developing State, local, and tribal model codes and policies, to improve the capacity of grantees and communities to address the civil justice needs of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking who have legal representation, who are proceeding pro se, or who are proceeding with the assistance of a legal advocate; and

''(7) improve training and education to assist judges, judicial personnel, attorneys, child welfare personnel, and legal advocates in the civil justice system regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or child abuse.

''(c) CONSIDERATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In making grants for purposes described in paragraphs (1) through (6) of subsection (b), the Attorney General shall consider—

''(A) the number of families to be served by the proposed programs and services;

''(B) the extent to which the proposed programs and services serve underserved populations;

''(C) the extent to which the applicant demonstrates cooperation and collaboration with nonprofit, nongovernmental entities in the local community with demonstrated histories of effective work on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including State or tribal domestic violence coalitions, State or tribal sexual assault coalitions, local shelters, and programs for domestic violence and sexual assault victims; and

''(D) the extent to which the applicant demonstrates coordination and collaboration with State, tribal, and local court systems, including mechanisms for communication and referral.

''(2) OTHER GRANTS.—In making grants under subsection (b)(8) the Attorney General shall take into account the extent to which the grantee has expertise addressing the judicial system's handling of family violence, child custody, child abuse and neglect, adoption, foster care, supervised visitation, divorce, and parentage.

''(d) APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS.—The Attorney General may make a grant under this section to an applicant that—

''(1) demonstrates expertise in the areas of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or child sexual abuse, as appropriate;

''(2) ensures that any fees charged to individuals for use of supervised visitation programs and services are based on the income of those individuals, unless otherwise provided by court order;

''(3) if the applicant proposes to operate supervised visitation programs and services or safe visitation exchange, demonstrates that adequate security measures, including adequate facilities, procedures, and personnel capable of preventing violence, and adequate standards are, or will be, in place (including the development of protocols or policies to ensure that confidential information is not shared with courts, law enforcement agencies, or child welfare agencies unless necessary to ensure the safety of any child or adult using the services of a program funded under this section);

''(4) certifies that the organizational policies of the applicant do not require mediation or counseling involving offenders and victims being physically present in the same place, in cases where domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking is alleged;

''(5) certifies that any person providing legal assistance through a program funded under this section has completed or will complete training on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including child sexual abuse, and related legal issues; and

''(6) certifies that any person providing custody evaluation or guardian ad litem services through a program funded under this section has completed or will complete training, developed with input from and in collaboration with a tribal, State, territorial, or local domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking victim service provider or coalition, on the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault, including child sexual abuse, that includes training on how to review evidence of past abuse and the use of evidenced-based theories to make recommendations on custody and visitation.

''(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, $22,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2013 through 2017. Amounts appropriated pursuant to this subsection are authorized to remain available until expended.

''(f) ALLOTMENT FOR INDIAN TRIBES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not less than 10 percent of the total amount available under this section for each fiscal year shall be available for grants under the program authorized by section 2015 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–10).

''(2) APPLICABILITY OF PART.—The requirements of this section shall not apply to funds allocated for the program described in paragraph (1).''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subtitle J of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043 et seq.) is repealed.

SEC. 105. COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM.

Subtitle B of title II of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13011 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 216 (42 U.S.C. 13012), by striking ''January 1, 2010'' and inserting ''January 1, 2015'';

(2) in section 217 (42 U.S.C. 13013)—

(A) in subsection (c)(2)(A), by striking ''Code of Ethics'' and inserting ''Standards for Programs''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e) REPORTING.—An organization that receives a grant under this section for a fiscal year shall submit to the Administrator a report regarding the use of the grant for the fiscal year, including a discussion of outcome performance measures (which shall be established by the Administrator) to determine the effectiveness of the programs of the organization in meeting the needs of children in the child welfare system.''; and

(3) in section 219(a) (42 U.S.C. 13014(a)), by striking ''fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2013 through 2017''.

SEC. 106. OUTREACH AND SERVICES TO UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS GRANT.

Section 120 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14045) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 120. GRANTS FOR OUTREACH AND SERVICES TO UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS.

''(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts appropriated under the grant programs identified in paragraph (2), the Attorney General shall take 2 percent of such appropriated amounts and combine them to award grants to eligible entities described in subsection (b) of this section to develop and implement outreach strategies targeted at adult or youth victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking in underserved populations and to provide victim services to meet the needs of adult and youth victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in underserved populations. The requirements of the grant programs identified in paragraph (2) shall not apply to this grant program.

''(2) PROGRAMS COVERED.—The programs identified in this paragraph are the programs carried out under the following provisions:

''(A) Part T of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (STOP grants).

''(B) Part U of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (Grants to encourage arrest policies).

''(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Eligible entities under this section are—

''(1) population specific organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in providing population specific services in the relevant underserved communities, or population specific organizations working in partnership with a victim service provider or domestic violence or sexual assault coalition;

''(2) victim service providers offering population specific services for a specific underserved population; or

''(3) victim service providers working in partnership with a national, State, or local organization that has demonstrated experience and expertise in providing population specific services in the relevant underserved population.

''(c) PLANNING GRANTS.—The Attorney General may use up to 20 percent of funds available under this section to make one-time planning grants to eligible entities to support the planning and development of specially designed and targeted programs for adult and youth victims in one or more underserved populations, including—

''(1) identifying, building, and strengthening partnerships with potential collaborators within underserved populations, Federal, State, tribal, territorial or local government entities, and public and private organizations;

''(2) conducting a needs assessment of the community and the targeted underserved population or populations to determine what the barriers are to service access and what factors contribute to those barriers, using input from the targeted underserved population or populations;

''(3) identifying promising prevention, outreach, and intervention strategies for victims from a targeted underserved population or populations; and

''(4) developing a plan, with the input of the targeted underserved population or populations, for—

''(A) implementing prevention, outreach, and intervention strategies to address the barriers to accessing services;

''(B) promoting community engagement in the prevention of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking within the targeted underserved populations; and

''(C) evaluating the program.

''(d) IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS.—The Attorney General shall make grants to eligible entities for the purpose of providing or enhancing population specific outreach and victim services to adult and youth victims in one or more underserved populations, including—

''(1) working with Federal, State, tribal, territorial and local governments, agencies, and organizations to develop or enhance population specific victim services;

''(2) strengthening the capacity of underserved populations to provide population specific services;

''(3) strengthening the capacity of traditional victim service providers to provide population specific services;

''(4) strengthening the effectiveness of criminal and civil justice interventions by providing training for law enforcement, prosecutors, judges and other court personnel on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking in underserved populations; or

''(5) working in cooperation with an underserved population to develop and implement outreach, education, prevention, and intervention strategies that highlight available resources and the specific issues faced by victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking from underserved populations.

''(e) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity desiring a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Director of the Office on Violence Against Women at such time, in such form, and in such manner as the Director may prescribe.

''(f) REPORTS.—Each eligible entity receiving a grant under this section shall annually submit to the Director of the Office on Violence Against Women a report that describes the activities carried out with grant funds during the preceding fiscal year.

''(g) DEFINITIONS AND GRANT CONDITIONS.—In this section the definitions and grant conditions in section 40002 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925) shall apply.

''(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to the funds identified in subsection (a)(1), there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2013 through 2017.''.

SEC. 107. CULTURALLY SPECIFIC SERVICES GRANT.

Section 121 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14045a) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**and linguistically**'';

(2) by striking ''and linguistically'' each place it appears;

(3) by striking ''and linguistic'' each place it appears;

(4) by amending paragraph (2) of subsection (a) to read as follows:

''(2) PROGRAMS COVERED.—The programs identified in this paragraph are the programs carried out under the following provisions:

''(A) Part U of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796hh) (Grants to encourage arrest policies).

''(B) Section 1201 of division B of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–6) (Legal assistance for victims).

''(C) Section 40295 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13971) (Rural domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and child abuse enforcement assistance).

''(D) Section 40802 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14041a) (Enhanced training and services to end violence against women later in life).

''(E) Section 1402 of division B of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–7) (Education, training, and enhanced services to end violence against and abuse of women with disabilities).''; and

(5) in subsection (g), by striking ''linguistic and''.

SEC. 108. REDUCTION IN RAPE KIT BACKLOG.

Section 2(c)(3) of the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 14135(c)(3)), is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2012''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) For each of the fiscal years 2013 and 2014, not less than 75 percent of the grant amounts shall be awarded for purposes under subsection (a)(2).''.

SEC. 109. ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT TRAINING PROGRAMS.

Section 40152(c) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13941(c)) is amended by striking ''to carry out this section'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''to carry out this section $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017.''.

SEC. 110. CHILD ABUSE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR JUDICIAL PERSONNEL AND PRACTITIONERS.

Section 224(a) of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13024(a)) is amended by striking ''$2,300,000'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''$2,300,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017.''.

TITLE II—IMPROVING SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING

SEC. 201. SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES PROGRAM.

(a) GRANTS TO STATES AND TERRITORIES.—Section 41601(b) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043g(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''other programs'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''other nongovernmental or tribal programs and projects to assist individuals who have been victimized by sexual assault, without regard to the age of the individual.'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations for programs and activities'' and inserting ''nongovernmental or tribal programs and activities''; and

(B) in subparagraph (C)(v), by striking ''linguistically and''; and

(3) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in the first sentence—

(i) by inserting ''and territory'' after ''each State'';

(ii) by striking ''1.50 percent'' and inserting ''0.75 percent''; and

(iii) by striking '', except that'' and all that follows through ''of the total appropriations''; and

(B) in the last sentence, by striking ''the preceding formula'' and inserting ''this paragraph''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 41601(f)(1) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043g(f)(1)) is amended by striking ''$50,000,000 to remain available until expended for each of the fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''$40,000,000 to remain available until expended for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017''.

SEC. 202. RURAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, STALKING, AND CHILD ABUSE ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE.

Section 40295 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13971) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)(H), by inserting '', including sexual assault forensic examiners'' before the semicolon;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''victim advocacy groups'' and inserting ''victim service providers''; and

(ii) by inserting '', including developing multidisciplinary teams focusing on high-risk cases with the goal of preventing domestic and dating violence homicides'' before the semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking ''and other long- and short-term assistance'' and inserting ''legal assistance, and other long-term and short-term victim services and population specific services''; and

(ii) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) to develop, expand, or strengthen programs addressing sexual assault, including sexual assault forensic examiner programs, Sexual Assault Response Teams, law enforcement training, and programs addressing rape kit backlogs.''; and

(3) in subsection (e)(1), by striking ''$55,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017''.

SEC. 203. TRAINING AND SERVICES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES GRANTS.

Section 1402 of division B of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–7) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''(including using evidence-based indicators to assess the risk of domestic and dating violence homicide)'' after ''risk reduction'';

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking ''victim service organizations'' and inserting ''victim service providers''; and

(C) in paragraph (5), by striking ''victim services organizations'' and inserting ''victim service providers'';

(2) in subsection (c)(1)(D), by striking ''nonprofit and nongovernmental victim services organization, such as a State'' and inserting ''victim service provider, such as a State or tribal''; and

(3) in subsection (e), by striking ''$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2007 through 2011''

and inserting ''$9,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017''.

SEC. 204. GRANT FOR TRAINING AND SERVICES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LATER LIFE.

Section 40802 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14041a) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 40802. GRANT FOR TRAINING AND SERVICES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LATER LIFE.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'eligible entity' means an entity that—

''(A) is—

''(i) a State;

''(ii) a unit of local government;

''(iii) a tribal government or tribal organization;

''(iv) a population specific organization with demonstrated experience in assisting individuals in later life;

''(v) a victim service provider; or

''(vi) a State, tribal, or territorial domestic violence or sexual assault coalition; and

''(B) is partnered with—

''(i) a law enforcement agency;

''(ii) an office of a prosecutor;

''(iii) a victim service provider; or

''(iv) a nonprofit program or government agency with demonstrated experience in assisting individuals in later life.

''(2) The term 'elder abuse' means domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking committed against individuals in later life.

''(3) The term 'individual in later life' means an individual who is 60 years of age or older.

''(b) GRANT PROGRAM.—

''(1) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Attorney General may make grants to eligible entities to carry out the activities described in paragraph (2). In awarding such grants, the Attorney General shall consult with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to ensure that the activities funded under this section are not duplicative with the activities funded under the elder abuse prevention programs of the Department of Health and Human Services.

''(2) MANDATORY AND PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—

''(A) MANDATORY ACTIVITIES.—An eligible entity receiving a grant under this section shall use the funds received under the grant to—

''(i) provide training programs to assist law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, agencies of States or units of local government, population specific organizations, victim service providers, victim advocates, and relevant officers in Federal, tribal, State, territorial, and local courts in recognizing and addressing instances of elder abuse;

''(ii) provide or enhance services for victims of elder abuse;

''(iii) establish or support multidisciplinary collaborative community responses to victims of elder abuse; and

''(iv) conduct cross-training for law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, agencies of States or units of local government, attorneys, health care providers, population specific organizations, faith-based advocates, victim service providers, and courts to better serve victims of elder abuse.

''(B) PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—An eligible entity receiving a grant under this section may use not more than 10 percent of the funds received under the grant to—

''(i) provide training programs to assist attorneys, health care providers, faith-based leaders, or other community-based organizations in recognizing and addressing instances of elder abuse; or

''(ii) conduct outreach activities and awareness campaigns to ensure that victims of elder abuse receive appropriate assistance.

''(3) UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS.—In making grants under this section, the Attorney General shall give priority to proposals providing culturally specific or population specific services.

''(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $9,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017.''.

TITLE III—SERVICES, PROTECTION, AND JUSTICE FOR YOUNG VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

SEC. 301. RAPE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION GRANT.

Section 393A of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280b–1b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting '', territorial, or tribal'' after ''crisis centers, State''; and

(B) in paragraph (6), by inserting ''and alcohol'' after ''about drugs'';

(2) in subsection (c)(1), by striking ''$80,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017''; and

(3) in subsection (c), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) FUNDING FORMULA.—Amounts provided under this section shall be allotted to each State, territory, and the District of Columbia based on population. If the amounts appropriated under paragraph (1) exceed $48,000,000 in any fiscal year, a minimum allocation of $150,000 shall be awarded to each State and territory and the District of Columbia. Any remaining funds shall be allotted to each State and territory and the District of Columbia based on population.''.

SEC. 302. CREATING HOPE THROUGH OUTREACH, OPTIONS, SERVICES, AND EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle L of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043c et seq.) is amended by striking sections 41201 through 41204 and inserting the following:

''SEC. 41201. CREATING HOPE THROUGH OUTREACH, OPTIONS, SERVICES, AND EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH (CHOOSE CHILDREN AND YOUTH).

''(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Attorney General, working in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education, shall award grants to enhance the safety of youth and children who are victims of, or exposed to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and to prevent future violence.

''(b) PROGRAM PURPOSES.—Funds provided under this section may be used for the following program purpose areas:

''(1) SERVICES TO ADVOCATE FOR AND RESPOND TO YOUTH.—To develop, expand, and strengthen victim interventions and services that target youth who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Services may include victim services, counseling, advocacy, mentoring, educational support, transportation, legal assistance in civil, criminal and administrative matters, such as family law cases, housing cases, child welfare proceedings, campus administrative proceedings, and civil protection order proceedings, services to address sex trafficking, population specific services, and other activities that support youth in finding safety, stability, and justice and in addressing the emotional, cognitive, and physical effects of trauma on youth. Funds may be used to—

''(A) assess and analyze available services for youth victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, determining relevant barriers to such services in a particular locality, and developing a community protocol to address such problems collaboratively;

''(B) develop and implement policies, practices, and procedures to effectively respond to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against youth; or

''(C) provide technical assistance and training to enhance the ability of school personnel, victim service providers, child protective service workers, staff of law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, court personnel, individuals who work in after school programs, medical personnel, social workers, mental health personnel, and workers in other programs that serve children and youth to improve their ability to appropriately respond to the needs of children and youth who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, as well as homeless youth, and to properly refer such children, youth, and their families to appropriate services.

''(2) SUPPORTING YOUTH THROUGH EDUCATION AND PROTECTION.—To enable secondary or elementary schools that serve students in any of grades five through twelve and institutions of higher education to—

''(A) provide training to school personnel, including health care providers and security personnel, on the needs of students who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;

''(B) develop and implement age-appropriate prevention and intervention policies in accordance with State law in secondary or elementary schools that serve students in any of grades five through twelve, including appropriate responses to, and identification and referral procedures for, students who are experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and procedures for handling the requirements of court protective orders issued to or against students;

''(C) provide support services for student victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, such as a resource person who is either on-site or on-call;

''(D) provide evidence-based educational programs for students regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; or

''(E) develop strategies to increase identification, support, referrals, and prevention programs for youth who are at high risk of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

''(c) ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an entity shall be—

''(A) a victim service provider, tribal nonprofit organization, population specific organization, or community-based organization with a demonstrated history of effective work addressing the needs of youth, including runaway or homeless youth, who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or

''(B) a victim service provider that is partnered with an entity that has a demonstrated history of effective work addressing the needs of youth.

''(2) PARTNERSHIPS.—

''(A) EDUCATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant for the purposes described in subsection (b)(2), an entity described in paragraph (1) shall be partnered with an elementary school or secondary school (as such terms are defined in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965), charter school (as defined in section 5210 of such Act), a school that is operated or supported by the Bureau of Indian Education, or a legally operating private school, a school administered by the Department of Defense under section 2164 of title 10, United States Code, or section 1402 of the Defense Dependents' Education Act of 1978, a group of such schools, a local educational agency (as defined in section 9101(26) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965), or an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965).

''(B) OTHER PARTNERSHIPS.—All applicants under this section are encouraged to work in partnership with organizations and agencies that work with the relevant youth population. Such entities may include—

''(i) a State, tribe, unit of local government, or territory;

''(ii) a population specific or community-based organization;

''(iii) batterer intervention programs or sex offender treatment programs with specialized knowledge and experience working with youth offenders; or

''(iv) any other agencies or nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations with the capacity to provide effective assistance to the adult, youth, and child victims served by the partnership.

''(d) GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS.—Applicants for grants under this section shall establish and implement policies, practices, and procedures that—

''(1) require and include appropriate referral systems for child and youth victims;

''(2) protect the confidentiality and privacy of child and youth victim information, particularly in the context of parental or third-party involvement and consent, mandatory reporting duties, and working with other service providers with priority on victim safety and autonomy;

''(3) ensure that all individuals providing intervention or prevention programs to children or youth through a program funded under this section have completed, or will complete, sufficient training in connection with domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

''(4) ensure that parents are informed of the programs funded under this program that are being offered at their child's school.

''(e) PRIORITY.—The Attorney General shall prioritize grant applications under this section that coordinate with prevention programs in the community.

''(f) DEFINITIONS AND GRANT CONDITIONS.—In this section, the definitions and grant conditions provided for in section 40002 shall apply.

''(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, $15,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2013 through 2017.

''(h) ALLOTMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not less than 50 percent of the total amount appropriated under this section for each fiscal year shall be used for the purposes described in subsection (b)(1).

''(2) INDIAN TRIBES.—Not less than 10 percent of the total amount appropriated under this section for each fiscal year shall be made available for grants under the program authorized by section 2015 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–10).''.

(b) VAWA GRANT REQUIREMENTS.—Section 40002(b) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925(b)), as amended by section 3(b)(4), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(14) REQUIREMENT FOR EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS.—Any educational programming, training, or public awareness communications regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are funded under this title must be evidence-based.''.

SEC. 303. GRANTS TO COMBAT VIOLENT CRIMES ON CAMPUSES.

Section 304 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14045b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''and'' after ''stalking on campuses,'';

(ii) by striking ''crimes against women on'' and inserting ''crimes on''; and

(iii) by inserting '', and to develop and strengthen prevention education and awareness programs'' before the period; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''$500,000'' and inserting ''$300,000'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting '', strengthen,'' after ''To develop''; and

(ii) by striking ''assault and stalking,'' and inserting ''assault, and stalking, including the use of technology to commit these crimes,'';

(B) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by inserting ''and population specific services'' after ''strengthen victim services programs'';

(ii) by striking ''entities carrying out'' and all that follows through ''stalking victim services programs'' and inserting ''victim service providers''; and

(iii) by inserting '', regardless of whether the services provided by such program are provided by the institution or in coordination with community victim service providers'' before the period at the end; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(9) To provide evidence-based educational programming for students regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

''(10) To develop or adapt population specific strategies and projects for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking from underserved populations on campus.'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''any non-profit'' and all that follows through the first occurrence of ''victim services programs'' and inserting ''victim service providers'';

(ii) by redesignating subparagraphs (D) through (F) as subparagraphs (E) through (G), respectively; and

(iii) by inserting after subparagraph (C), the following:

''(D) describe how underserved populations in the campus community will be adequately served, including the provision of relevant population specific services;''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking ''2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''2013 through 2017'';

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) by striking paragraph (3); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2), the following:

''(3) GRANTEE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS.—Each grantee shall comply with the following minimum requirements during the grant period:

''(A) The grantee shall create a coordinated community response including both organizations external to the institution and relevant divisions of the institution.

''(B) The grantee shall establish a mandatory prevention and education program on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking for all incoming students.

''(C) The grantee shall train all campus law enforcement to respond effectively to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

''(D) The grantee shall train all members of campus disciplinary boards to respond effectively to situations involving domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.''; and

(5) in subsection (e), by striking ''$12,000,000'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''$12,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2013 through 2017.''.

SEC. 304. NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3711 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new part:

''PART LL—NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY

''SEC. 3021. NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY.

''(a) AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH AND OPERATE CENTER.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services is authorized to establish and operate a National Center for Campus Public Safety (referred to in this section as the 'Center').

''(2) GRANT AUTHORITY.—The Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services is authorized to award grants to institutions of higher education and other nonprofit organizations to assist in carrying out the functions of the Center required under subsection (b).

''(b) FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTER.—The center shall—

''(1) provide quality education and training for campus public safety agencies of institutions of higher education and the agencies' collaborative partners, including campus mental health agencies;

''(2) foster quality research to strengthen the safety and security of institutions of higher education;

''(3) serve as a clearinghouse for the identification and dissemination of information, policies, procedures, and best practices relevant to campus public safety, including off-campus housing safety, the prevention of violence against persons and property, and emergency response and evacuation procedures;

''(4) develop protocols, in conjunction with the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of Education, State, local, and tribal governments and law enforcement agencies, private and nonprofit organizations and associations, and other stakeholders, to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from, natural and man-made emergencies or dangerous situations involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of the campus community;

''(5) promote the development and dissemination of effective behavioral threat assessment and management models to prevent campus violence;

''(6) coordinate campus safety information (including ways to increase off-campus housing safety) and resources available from the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Education, State, local, and tribal governments and law enforcement agencies, and private and nonprofit organizations and associations;

''(7) increase cooperation, collaboration, and consistency in prevention, response, and problem-solving methods among law enforcement, mental health, and other agencies and jurisdictions serving institutions of higher education;

''(8) develop standardized formats and models for mutual aid agreements and memoranda of understanding between campus security agencies and other public safety organizations and mental health agencies; and

''(9) report annually to Congress and the Attorney General on activities performed by the Center during the previous 12 months.

''(c) COORDINATION WITH AVAILABLE RESOURCES.—In establishing the Center, the Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services shall—

''(1) consult with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of Education, and the Attorney General of each State; and

''(2) coordinate the establishment and operation of the Center with campus public safety resources that may be available within the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Education.

''(d) DEFINITION OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—In this section, the term 'institution of higher education' has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).''.

(b) JUSTICE PROGRAM CONSOLIDATIONS.—Effective 30 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Office of Dispute Resolution of the Department of Justice and the jurisdiction and employees of such office shall be—

(1) transferred to the Office of Legal Policy of the Department of Justice; and

(2) funded through the general administration appropriation of the Office of Legal Policy.

TITLE IV—VIOLENCE REDUCTION PRACTICES

SEC. 401. STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION.

Section 402(c) of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 280b–4(c)) is amended by striking ''$2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2007

through 2011'' and inserting ''$1,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2013 through 2017''.

SEC. 402. SAVING MONEY AND REDUCING TRAGEDIES THROUGH PREVENTION GRANTS.

(a) SMART PREVENTION.—Section 41303 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043d–2) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 41303. SAVING MONEY AND REDUCING TRAGEDIES THROUGH PREVENTION (SMART PREVENTION).

''(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education, is authorized to award grants for the purpose of preventing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by taking a comprehensive approach that focuses on youth, children exposed to violence, and men as leaders and influencers of social norms.

''(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Funds provided under this section may be used for the following purposes:

''(1) TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION.—To develop, maintain, or enhance programs that change attitudes and behaviors around the acceptability of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and provide education and skills training to young individuals and individuals who influence young individuals. The prevention program may use evidence-based, evidence-informed, or innovative strategies and practices focused on youth. Such a program should include—

''(A) evidence-based age education on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sexual coercion, as well as healthy relationship skills, in school, in the community, or in health care settings;

''(B) community-based collaboration and training for those with influence on youth, such as parents, teachers, coaches, health care providers, faith-leaders, older teens, and mentors;

''(C) education and outreach to change environmental factors contributing to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

''(D) policy development targeted to prevention, including school-based policies and protocols.

''(2) CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE AND ABUSE.—To develop, maintain or enhance programs designed to prevent future incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by preventing, reducing and responding to children's exposure to violence in the home. Such programs may include—

''(A) providing services for children exposed to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including direct counseling or advocacy, and support for the non-abusing parent; and

''(B) training and coordination for educational, after-school, and childcare programs on how to safely and confidentially identify children and families experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and properly refer children exposed and their families to services and violence prevention programs.

''(3) ENGAGING MEN AS LEADERS AND ROLE MODELS.—To develop, maintain or enhance programs that work with men to prevent domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by helping men to serve as role models and social influencers of other men and youth at the individual, school, community or statewide levels.

''(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an entity shall be—

''(1) a victim service provider, community-based organization, tribe or tribal organization, or other nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that has a history of effective work preventing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and expertise in the specific area for which they are applying for funds; or

''(2) a partnership between a victim service provider, community-based organization, tribe or tribal organization, or other nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that has a history of effective work preventing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and at least one of the following that has expertise in serving children exposed to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, youth domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking prevention, or engaging men to prevent domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking:

''(A) A public, charter, tribal, or nationally accredited private middle or high school, a school administered by the Department of Defense under section 2164 of title 10, United States Code or section 1402 of the Defense Dependents' Education Act of 1978, a group of schools, or a school district.

''(B) A local community-based organization, population-specific organization, or faith-based organization that has established expertise in providing services to youth.

''(C) A community-based organization, population-specific organization, university or health care clinic, faith-based organization, or other nonprofit, nongovernmental organization.

''(D) A nonprofit, nongovernmental entity providing services for runaway or homeless youth affected by domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

''(E) Health care entities eligible for reimbursement under title XVIII of the Social Security Act, including providers that target the special needs of children and youth.

''(F) Any other agencies, population-specific organizations, or nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations with the capacity to provide necessary expertise to meet the goals of the program.

''(d) GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Applicants for grants under this section shall prepare and submit to the Director an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Director may require that demonstrates the capacity of the applicant and partnering organizations to undertake the project.

''(2) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.—Applicants under this section shall establish and implement policies, practices, and procedures that are consistent with the best practices developed under section 402 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 280b–4) and—

''(A) include appropriate referral systems to direct any victim identified during program activities to highly qualified follow-up care;

''(B) protect the confidentiality and privacy of adult and youth victim information, particularly in the context of parental or third-party involvement and consent, mandatory reporting duties, and working with other service providers;

''(C) ensure that all individuals providing prevention programming through a program funded under this section have completed or will complete sufficient training in connection with domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking; and

''(D) document how prevention programs are coordinated with service programs in the community.

''(3) PREFERENCE.—In selecting grant recipients under this section, the Attorney General shall give preference to applicants that—

''(A) include outcome-based evaluation; and

''(B) identify any other community, school, or State-based efforts that are working on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking prevention and explain how the grantee or partnership will add value, coordinate with other programs, and not duplicate existing efforts.

''(e) DEFINITIONS AND GRANT CONDITIONS.—In this section, the definitions and grant conditions provided for in section 40002 shall apply.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, $15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017.

''(g) ALLOTMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not less than 25 percent of the total amounts appropriated under this section in each fiscal year shall be used for each set of purposes described in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of subsection (b).

''(2) INDIAN TRIBES.—Not less than 10 percent of the total amounts appropriated under this section in each fiscal year shall be made available for grants to Indian tribes or tribal organizations.''.

(b) REPEALS.—The following provisions are repealed:

(1) Sections 41304 and 41305 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043d–3 and 14043d–4).

(2) Section 403 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14045c).

TITLE V—STRENGTHENING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM'S RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING

SEC. 501. CONSOLIDATION OF GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM'S RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING.

(a) GRANTS.—Section 399P of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280g–4) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 399P. GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM'S RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award grants for—

''(1) the development or enhancement and implementation of interdisciplinary training for health professionals, public health staff, and allied health professionals;

''(2) the development or enhancement and implementation of education programs for medical, nursing, dental, and other health profession students and residents to prevent and respond to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

''(3) the development or enhancement and implementation of comprehensive statewide strategies to improve the response of clinics, public health facilities, hospitals, and other health settings (including behavioral and mental health programs) to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

''(b) USE OF FUNDS.—

''(1) REQUIRED USES.—Amounts provided under a grant under this section shall be used to—

''(A) fund interdisciplinary training and education programs under paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a) that—

''(i) are designed to train medical, psychology, dental, social work, nursing, and other health profession students, interns, residents, fellows, or current health care providers to identify and provide health care services (including mental or behavioral health care services and referrals to appropriate community services) to individuals who are or who have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and

''(ii) plan and develop clinical training components for integration into approved internship, residency, and fellowship training or continuing medical or other health education training that address physical, mental, and behavioral health issues, including protective factors, related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other forms of violence and abuse, focus on reducing health disparities and preventing violence and abuse, and include the primacy of victim safety and confidentiality; and

''(B) design and implement comprehensive strategies to improve the response of the health care system to domestic or sexual violence in clinical and public health settings, hospitals, clinics, and other health settings (including behavioral and mental health), under subsection (a)(3) through—

''(i) the implementation, dissemination, and evaluation of policies and procedures to guide health professionals and public health staff in identifying and responding to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including strategies to ensure that health information is maintained in a manner that protects the patient's privacy and safety, and safely uses health information technology to improve documentation, identification, assessment, treatment, and follow-up care;

''(ii) the development of on-site access to services to address the safety, medical, and mental health needs of patients by increasing the capacity of existing health care professionals and public health staff to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, or by contracting with or hiring domestic or sexual assault advocates to provide such services or to model other services appropriate to the geographic and cultural needs of a site;

''(iii) the development of measures and methods for the evaluation of the practice of identification, intervention, and documentation regarding victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including the development and testing of quality improvement measurements; and

''(iv) the provision of training and followup technical assistance to health care professionals, and public health staff, and allied health professionals to identify, assess, treat, and refer clients who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including using tools and training materials already developed.

''(2) PERMISSIBLE USES.—

''(A) CHILD AND ELDER ABUSE.—To the extent consistent with the purpose of this section, a grantee may use amounts received under this section to address, as part of a comprehensive programmatic approach implemented under the grant, issues relating to child or elder abuse.

''(B) RURAL AREAS.—Grants funded under paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a) may be used to offer to rural areas community-based training opportunities (which may include the use of distance learning networks and other available technologies needed to reach isolated rural areas) for medical, nursing, and other health profession students and residents on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and, as appropriate, other forms of violence and abuse.

''(C) OTHER USES.—Grants funded under subsection (a)(3) may be used for—

''(i) the development of training modules and policies that address the overlap of child abuse, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and elder abuse, as well as childhood exposure to domestic and sexual violence;

''(ii) the development, expansion, and implementation of sexual assault forensic medical examination or sexual assault nurse examiner programs;

''(iii) the inclusion of the health effects of lifetime exposure to violence and abuse as well as related protective factors and behavioral risk factors in health professional training schools, including medical, dental, nursing, social work, and mental and behavioral health curricula, and allied health service training courses; or

''(iv) the integration of knowledge of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking into health care accreditation and professional licensing examinations, such as medical, dental, social work, and nursing boards, and where appropriate, other allied health exams.

''(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES.—

''(1) CONFIDENTIALITY AND SAFETY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Grantees under this section shall ensure that all programs developed with grant funds address issues of confidentiality and patient safety and comply with applicable confidentiality and nondisclosure requirements under section 40002(b)(2) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, and that faculty and staff associated with delivering educational components are fully trained in procedures that will protect the immediate and ongoing security and confidentiality of the patients, patient records, and staff. Such grantees shall consult entities with demonstrated expertise in the confidentiality and safety needs of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking on the development and adequacy of confidentially and security procedures, and provide documentation of such consultation.

''(B) ADVANCE NOTICE OF INFORMATION DISCLOSURE.—Grantees under this section shall provide to patients advance notice about any circumstances under which information may be disclosed, such as mandatory reporting laws, and shall give patients the option to receive information and referrals without affirmatively disclosing abuse.

''(2) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—A grantee shall use not more than 10 percent of the amounts received under a grant under this section for administrative expenses.

''(3) PREFERENCE.—In selecting grant recipients under this section, the Secretary shall give preference to applicants based on the strength of their evaluation strategies, with priority given to outcome-based evaluations.

''(4) APPLICATION.—

''(A) SUBSECTION (a) (1) AND (2) GRANTEES.—An entity desiring a grant under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (a) shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information and assurances as the Secretary may require, including—

''(i) documentation that the applicant represents a team of entities working collaboratively to strengthen the response of the health care system to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and which includes at least one of each of—

''(I) an accredited school of allopathic or osteopathic medicine, psychology, nursing, dentistry, social work, or other health field;

''(II) a health care facility or system; or

''(III) a government or nonprofit entity with a history of effective work in the fields of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and

''(ii) strategies for the dissemination and sharing of curricula and other educational materials developed under the grant, if any, with other interested health professions schools and national resource repositories for materials on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

''(B) SUBSECTION (a)(3) GRANTEES.—An entity desiring a grant under subsection (a)(3) shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information and assurances as the Secretary may require, including—

''(i) documentation that all training, education, screening, assessment, services, treatment, and any other approach to patient care will be informed by an understanding of violence and abuse victimization and trauma-specific approaches that will be integrated into prevention, intervention, and treatment activities;

''(ii) strategies for the development and implementation of policies to prevent and address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking over the lifespan in health care settings;

''(iii) a plan for consulting with State and tribal domestic violence or sexual assault coalitions, national nonprofit victim advocacy organizations, State or tribal law enforcement task forces (where appropriate), and population-specific organizations with demonstrated expertise in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;

''(iv) with respect to an application for a grant under which the grantee will have contact with patients, a plan, developed in collaboration with local victim service providers, to respond appropriately to and make correct referrals for individuals who disclose that they are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other types of violence, and documentation provided by the grantee of an ongoing collaborative relationship with a local victim service provider; and

''(v) with respect to an application for a grant proposing to fund a program described in subsection (b)(2)(C)(ii), a certification that any sexual assault forensic medical examination and sexual assault nurse examiner programs supported with such grant funds will adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Attorney General.

''(d) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive funding under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (a), an entity shall be—

''(A) a nonprofit organization with a history of effective work in the field of training health professionals with an understanding of, and clinical skills pertinent to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and lifetime exposure to violence and abuse;

''(B) an accredited school of allopathic or osteopathic medicine, psychology, nursing, dentistry, social work, or allied health;

''(C) a health care provider membership or professional organization, or a health care system; or

''(D) a State, tribal, territorial, or local entity.

''(2) SUBSECTION (a)(3) GRANTEES.—To be eligible to receive funding under subsection (a)(3), an entity shall be—

''(A) a State department (or other division) of health, a State, tribal, or territorial domestic violence or sexual assault coalition or victim service provider, or any other nonprofit, nongovernmental organization with a history of effective work in the fields of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and health care, including physical or mental health care; or

''(B) a local victim service provider, a local department (or other division) of health, a local health clinic, hospital, or health system, or any other community-based organization with a history of effective work in the field of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and health care, including physical or mental health care.

''(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the funds made available to carry out this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary may make grants or enter into contracts to provide technical assistance with respect to the planning, development, and operation of any program, activity or service carried out pursuant to this section. Not more than 8 percent of the funds appropriated under this section in each fiscal year may be used to fund technical assistance under this subsection.

''(2) AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS.—The Secretary shall make publicly available materials developed by grantees under this section, including materials on training, best practices, and research and evaluation.

''(3) REPORTING.—The Secretary shall publish a biennial report on—

''(A) the distribution of funds under this section; and

''(B) the programs and activities supported by such funds.

''(f) RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the funds made available to carry out this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary may use not more than 20 percent to make a grant or enter into a contract for research and evaluation of—

''(A) grants awarded under this section; and

''(B) other training for health professionals and effective interventions in the health care setting that prevent domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault across the lifespan, prevent the health effects of such violence, and improve the safety and health of individuals who are currently being victimized.

''(2) RESEARCH.—Research authorized in paragraph (1) may include—

''(A) research on the effects of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and childhood exposure to domestic violence, dating violence, or sexual assault on health behaviors, health conditions, and health status of individuals, families, and populations, including underserved populations;

''(B) research to determine effective health care interventions to respond to and prevent domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking;

''(C) research on the impact of domestic, dating, and sexual violence, childhood exposure to such violence, and stalking on the health care system, health care utilization, health care costs, and health status; and

''(D) research on the impact of adverse childhood experiences on adult experience with domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and adult health outcomes, including how to reduce or prevent the impact of adverse childhood experiences through the health care setting.

''(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017.

''(h) DEFINITIONS.—Except as otherwise provided in this section, the definitions in section 40002 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 apply to this section.''.

(b) REPEALS.—The following provisions are repealed:

(1) Chapter 11 of subtitle B of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (relating to research on effective interventions to address violence; 42 U.S.C. 13973; as added by section 505 of Public Law 109—162 (119 Stat. 3028)).

(2) Section 758 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 294h).

TITLE VI—SAFE HOMES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING

SEC. 601. HOUSING PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Subtitle N of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e et seq.) is amended—

(1) by inserting after the subtitle heading the following:

''CHAPTER 1—GRANT PROGRAMS'';

(2) in section 41402 (42 U.S.C. 14043e–1), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''subtitle'' and inserting ''chapter'';

(3) in section 41403 (42 U.S.C. 14043e–2), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''subtitle'' and inserting ''chapter''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''CHAPTER 2—HOUSING RIGHTS

''SEC. 41411. HOUSING PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this chapter:

''(1) AFFILIATED INDIVIDUAL.—The term 'affiliated individual' means, with respect to an individual—

''(A) a spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that individual stands in loco parentis; or

''(B) any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of that individual.

''(2) APPROPRIATE AGENCY.—The term 'appropriate agency' means, with respect to a covered housing program, the Executive department (as defined in section 101 of title 5, United States Code) that carries out the covered housing program.

''(3) COVERED HOUSING PROGRAM.—The term 'covered housing program' means—

''(A) the program under section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 (12 U.S.C. 1701q);

''(B) the program under section 811 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 8013);

''(C) the program under subtitle D of title VIII of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12901 et seq.);

''(D) each of the programs under title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360 et seq.);

''(E) the program under subtitle A of title II of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12741 et seq.);

''(F) the program under paragraph (3) of section 221(d) of the National Housing Act (12 U.S.C. 1715l(d)) for insurance of mortgages that bear interest at a rate determined under the proviso under paragraph (5) of such section 221(d);

''(G) the program under section 236 of the National Housing Act (12 U.S.C. 1715z–1);

''(H) the programs under sections 6 and 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437d and 1437f);

''(I) rural housing assistance provided under sections 514, 515, 516, 533, and 538 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1484, 1485, 1486, 1490m, and 1490p–2); and

''(J) the low-income housing tax credit program under section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(b) PROHIBITED BASIS FOR DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE OR EVICTION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—An applicant for or tenant of housing assisted under a covered housing program may not be denied admission to, denied assistance under, terminated from participation in, or evicted from the housing program or housing on the basis that the applicant or tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, if the applicant or tenant otherwise qualifies for admission, assistance, participation, or occupancy.

''(2) CONSTRUCTION OF LEASE TERMS.—An incident of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shall not be construed as—

''(A) a serious or repeated violation of a lease for housing assisted under a covered housing program by the victim or threatened victim of such incident; or

''(B) good cause for terminating the assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights to housing assisted under a covered housing program of the victim or threatened victim of such incident.

''(3) TERMINATION ON THE BASIS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.—

''(A) DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE, TENANCY, AND OCCUPANCY RIGHTS PROHIBITED.—No person may deny assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights to housing assisted under a covered housing program to a tenant solely on the basis of criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is engaged in by a member of the household of the tenant or any guest or other person under the control of the tenant, if the tenant or an affiliated individual of the tenant is the victim or threatened victim of such domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

''(B) BIFURCATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program may bifurcate a lease for the housing in order to evict, remove, or terminate assistance to any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant of the housing and who engages in criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against an affiliated individual or other individual, without evicting, removing, terminating assistance to, or otherwise penalizing a victim of such criminal activity who is also a tenant or lawful occupant of the housing.

''(ii) EFFECT OF EVICTION ON OTHER TENANTS.—If a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program evicts, removes, or terminates assistance to an individual under clause (i), and the individual is the sole tenant eligible to receive assistance under a covered housing program, the public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under the covered housing program shall provide any remaining tenant an opportunity to establish eligibility for the covered housing program. If a tenant described in the preceding sentence cannot establish eligibility, the public housing agency or owner or manager of the housing shall provide the tenant a reasonable time, as determined by the appropriate agency, to find new housing or to establish eligibility for housing under another covered housing program.

''(C) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall be construed—

''(i) to limit the authority of a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program, when notified of a court order, to comply with a court order with respect to—

''(I) the rights of access to or control of property, including civil protection orders issued to protect a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or

''(II) the distribution or possession of property among members of a household in a case;

''(ii) to limit any otherwise available authority of a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program to evict or terminate assistance to a tenant for any violation of a lease not premised on the act of violence in question against the tenant or an affiliated person of the tenant, if the public housing agency or owner or manager does not subject an individual who is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a more demanding standard than other tenants in determining whether to evict or terminate;

''(iii) to limit the authority to terminate assistance to a tenant or evict a tenant from housing assisted under a covered housing program if a public housing agency or owner or manager of the housing can demonstrate that an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or individuals employed at or providing service to the property would be present if the assistance is not terminated or the tenant is not evicted; or

''(iv) to supersede any provision of any Federal, State, or local law that provides greater protection than this section for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

''(c) DOCUMENTATION.—

''(1) REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTATION.—If an applicant for, or tenant of, housing assisted under a covered housing program represents to a public housing agency or owner or manager of the housing that the individual is entitled to protection under subsection (b), the public housing agency or owner or manager may request, in writing, that the applicant or tenant submit to the public housing agency or owner or manager a form of documentation described in paragraph (3).

''(2) FAILURE TO PROVIDE CERTIFICATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If an applicant or tenant does not provide the documentation requested under paragraph (1) within 14 business days after the tenant receives a request in writing for such certification from a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program, nothing in this chapter may be construed to limit the authority of the public housing agency or owner or manager to—

''(i) deny admission by the applicant or tenant to the covered program;

''(ii) deny assistance under the covered program to the applicant or tenant;

''(iii) terminate the participation of the applicant or tenant in the covered program; or

''(iv) evict the applicant, the tenant, or a lawful occupant that commits violations of a lease.

''(B) EXTENSION.—A public housing agency or owner or manager of housing may extend the 14-day deadline under subparagraph (A) at its discretion.

''(3) FORM OF DOCUMENTATION.—A form of documentation described in this paragraph is—

''(A) a certification form approved by the appropriate agency that—

''(i) states that an applicant or tenant is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;

''(ii) states that the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is the ground for protection under subsection (b) meets the requirements under subsection (b); and

''(iii) includes the name of the individual who committed the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, if the name is known and safe to provide;

''(B) a document that—

''(i) is signed by—

''(I) an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, a medical professional, or a mental health professional from whom an applicant or tenant has sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of the abuse; and

''(II) the applicant or tenant; and

''(ii) states under penalty of perjury that the individual described in clause (i)(I) believes that the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is the ground for protection under subsection (b) meets the requirements under subsection (b);

''(C) a record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency; or

''(D) at the discretion of a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program, a statement or other evidence provided by an applicant or tenant.

''(4) CONFIDENTIALITY.—Any information submitted to a public housing agency or owner or manager under this subsection, including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shall be maintained in confidence by the public housing agency or owner or manager and may not be entered into any shared database or disclosed to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that the disclosure is—

''(A) requested or consented to by the individual in writing;

''(B) required for use in an eviction proceeding under subsection (b); or

''(C) otherwise required by applicable law.

''(5) DOCUMENTATION NOT REQUIRED.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program to request that an individual submit documentation of the status of the individual as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

''(6) COMPLIANCE NOT SUFFICIENT TO CONSTITUTE EVIDENCE OF UNREASONABLE ACT.—Compliance with subsection (b) by a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program based on documentation received under this subsection, shall not be sufficient to constitute evidence of an unreasonable act or omission by the public housing agency or owner or manager or an employee or agent of the public housing agency or owner or manager. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to limit the liability of a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program for failure to comply with subsection (b).

''(7) RESPONSE TO CONFLICTING CERTIFICATION.—If a public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program receives documentation under this subsection that contains conflicting information, the public housing agency or owner or manager may require an applicant or tenant to submit third-party documentation, as described in subparagraph (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (3).

''(8) PREEMPTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to supersede any provision of any Federal, State, or local law that provides greater protection than this subsection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

''(d) NOTIFICATION.—

''(1) DEVELOPMENT.—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall develop a notice of the rights of individuals under this section, including the right to confidentiality and the limits thereof, and include such notice in documents required by law to be provided to tenants assisted under a covered housing program.

''(2) PROVISION.—The applicable public housing agency or owner or manager of housing assisted under a covered housing program shall provide the notice developed under paragraph (1) to an applicant for or tenant of housing assisted under a covered housing program—

''(A) at the time the applicant is denied residency in a dwelling unit assisted under the covered housing program;

''(B) at the time the individual is admitted to a dwelling unit assisted under the covered housing program; and

''(C) in multiple languages, consistent with guidance issued by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in accordance with Executive Order 13166 (42 U.S.C. 2000d–1 note; relating to access to services for persons with limited English proficiency).

''(e) EMERGENCY RELOCATION AND TRANSFERS.—Each appropriate agency shall develop a model emergency relocation and transfer plan for voluntary use by public housing agencies and owners or managers of housing assisted under a covered housing program that—

''(1) allows tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to relocate or transfer to another available and safe dwelling unit assisted under a covered housing program and retain their status as tenants under the covered housing program if—

''(A) the tenant expressly requests to move;

''(B)(i) the tenant reasonably believes that the tenant is threatened with imminent harm from further violence if the tenant remains within the same dwelling unit assisted under a covered housing program; or

''(ii) the sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking occurred on the premises during the 90-day period preceding the request to move; and

''(C) the tenant has provided documentation as described in subparagraph (A), (B), (C) or (D) of subsection (c)(3) if requested by a public housing agency or owner or manager;

''(2) incorporates reasonable confidentiality measures to ensure that the public housing agency or owner or manager does not disclose the location of the dwelling unit of a tenant to a person that commits an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against the tenant;

''(3) describes how the appropriate agency will coordinate relocations or transfers between dwelling units assisted under a covered housing program;

''(4) takes into consideration the existing rules and regulations of the covered housing program;

''(5) is tailored to the specific type of the covered housing program based on the volume and availability of dwelling units under the control or management of the public housing agency, owner, or manager; and

''(6) provides guidance for use in situations in which it is not feasible for an individual public housing agency, owner, or manager to effectuate a transfer.

''(f) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY TRANSFER.—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall establish policies and procedures under which a victim requesting an emergency transfer under subsection (e) may receive, subject to the availability of tenant protection vouchers for assistance under section 8(o)(16) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(16)), assistance under such section.

''(g) IMPLEMENTATION.—The appropriate agency with respect to each covered housing program shall implement this section, as this section applies to the covered housing program.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SECTION 6.—Section 6 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437d) is amended—

(A) in subsection (c)—

(i) by striking paragraph (3); and

(ii) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively;

(B) in subsection (l)—

(i) in paragraph (5), by striking '', and that an incident'' and all that follows through ''victim of such violence''; and

(ii) in paragraph (6), by striking ''; except that'' and all that follows through ''stalking.''; and

(C) by striking subsection (u).

(2) SECTION 8.—Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f) is amended—

(A) in subsection (c), by striking paragraph (9);

(B) in subsection (d)(1)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''and that an applicant'' and all that follows through ''assistance or admission''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) in clause (ii), by striking '', and that an incident'' and all that follows through ''victim of such violence''; and

(II) in clause (iii), by striking '', except that:'' and all that follows through ''stalking.'';

(C) in subsection (f)—

(i) in paragraph (6), by adding ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in paragraph (7), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period; and

(iii) by striking paragraphs (8), (9), (10), and (11);

(D) in subsection (o)—

(i) in paragraph (6)(B), by striking the last sentence;

(ii) in paragraph (7)—

(I) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''and that an incident'' and all that follows through ''victim of such violence''; and

(II) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''; except that'' and all that follows through ''stalking.''; and

(iii) by striking paragraph (20); and

(E) by striking subsection (ee).

(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by this Act, shall be construed—

(A) to limit the rights or remedies available to any person under section 6 or 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437d and 1437f), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act;

(B) to limit any right, remedy, or procedure otherwise available under any provision of part 5, 91, 880, 882, 883, 884, 886, 891, 903, 960, 966, 982, or 983 of title 24, Code of Federal Regulations, that—

(i) was issued under the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–162; 119 Stat. 2960) or an amendment made by that Act; and

(ii) provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking than this Act or the amendments made by this Act; or

(C) to disqualify an owner, manager, or other individual from participating in or receiving the benefits of the low-income housing tax credit program under section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 because of noncompliance with the provisions of this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 602. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE GRANTS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING.

Chapter 11 of subtitle B of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13975; as added by section 611 of Public Law 108–21 (117 Stat. 693)) is amended—

*(1) in the chapter heading, by striking ''**CHILD VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, STALKING, OR SEXUAL ASSAULT**'' and inserting ''**VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**''; and*

(2) in section 40299 (42 U.S.C. 13975)—

*(A) in the header, by striking ''**CHILD VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, STALKING, OR SEXUAL ASSAULT**'' and inserting ''**VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**'';*

(B) in subsection (a)(1), by striking ''fleeing'';

(C) by striking subsection (f); and

(D) in subsection (g)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by striking ''$40,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''$35,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017''; and

(ii) in paragraph (3)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''eligible'' and inserting ''qualified''; and

(II) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) QUALIFIED APPLICATION DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term 'qualified application' means an application that—

''(i) has been submitted by an eligible applicant;

''(ii) does not propose any significant activities that may compromise victim safety;

''(iii) reflects an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and

''(iv) does not propose prohibited activities, including mandatory services for victims, background checks of victims, or clinical evaluations to determine eligibility for services.''.

SEC. 603. ADDRESSING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING.

Subtitle N of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 41404(i) (42 U.S.C. 14043e–3(i)), by striking ''$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017''; and

(2) in section 41405(g) (42 U.S.C. 14043e–4(g)), by striking ''$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017''.

TITLE VII—ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

SEC. 701. NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON WORKPLACE RESPONSES TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE.

Section 41501(e) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043f(e)) is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2013 through 2017''.

TITLE VIII—IMMIGRATION PROVISIONS

SEC. 801. FRAUD PREVENTION INITIATIVES.

(a) CREDIBLE EVIDENCE CONSIDERED.—Section 240A(b)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1229b) is amended by striking subparagraph (D) and inserting the following:

''(D) CREDIBLE EVIDENCE CONSIDERED.—In acting on applications under this paragraph, the Attorney General shall consider any credible evidence relevant to the application, including credible evidence submitted by a national of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence accused of the conduct described in subparagraph (A)(i) so long as this evidence is not gathered in violation of section 384 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.''.

(b) APPLICATION OF SPECIAL RULE FOR BATTERED SPOUSE, PARENT, OR CHILD.—Section 204(a)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1154(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)(iii), by inserting after subclause (II) the following:

''(III)(aa) Upon filing, each petition under this clause shall be assigned to an investigative officer for adjudication and final determination of eligibility.

''(bb) During the adjudication of each petition under this paragraph, an investigative officer from a local office of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services shall conduct an in-person interview of the alien who filed the petition. The investigative officer may also gather other evidence so long as this evidence is not gathered in violation of section 384 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. The investigative officer who conducted the in-person interview shall provide to the investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligibility a summary of the interview and any other evidence gathered and a determination of the credibility of the interviewee and other evidence gathered.

''(cc) All interviews under this clause shall be conducted under oath and subject to applicable penalties for perjury.

''(dd) The investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligibility shall determine whether the petitioner had filed previous applications or petitions for immigration benefits that had been denied and whether the petitioner had been the beneficiary of a previous petition filed pursuant to this section that had been denied. If either was the case, the investigative officer shall consider the denials and the reasons for the denials as part of the adjudication of the petition.

''(ee) The investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligibility shall as part of the adjudication of the petition consult with the investigative officer at the local office of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services who had conducted the in-person interview of the alien who filed the petition.

''(ff) Upon the conclusion of the adjudication process under this subparagraph, the investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligibility shall issue a final written determination to approve or deny the petition. The investigative officer shall not approve the petition unless the officer finds, in writing and with particularity, that all requirements under this paragraph, including proof that the alien is a victim of the conduct described in clause (iii)(I)(bb), have been proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

''(IV) During the adjudication of a petition under this clause—

''(aa) the petition shall not be granted unless the petition is supported by a preponderance of the evidence; and

''(bb) all credible evidence submitted by an accused national of the United States or alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence shall be considered so long as this evidence was not gathered in violation of section 384 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

''(V)(aa) During the adjudication of a petition under this paragraph, the investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligibility shall determine whether any Federal, State, territorial, tribal, or local law enforcement agency has undertaken an investigation or prosecution of the abusive conduct alleged by the petitioning alien.

''(bb) If an investigation or prosecution was commenced, the investigative officer shall—

''(AA) obtain as much information as possible about the investigation or prosecution; and

''(BB) consider that information as part of the adjudication of the petition.

''(cc) If an investigation or prosecution is pending, the adjudication of the petition shall be stayed pending the conclusion of the investigation or prosecution. If no investigation has been undertaken or if a prosecutor's office has not commenced a prosecution after the matter was referred to it, that fact shall be considered by the investigative officer as part of the adjudication of the petition.

''(VI) If a petition filed under this paragraph is denied, any obligations under an underlying affidavit of support previously filed by the accused national of the United States or alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence shall be terminated.'';

(2) in subparagraph (A)(iv), by adding at the end the following: ''The petition shall be adjudicated according to the procedures that apply to self-petitioners under clause (iii).'';

(3) in subparagraph (A)(vii), by adding at the end the following continuation text:

''The petition shall be adjudicated according to the procedures that apply to self-petitioners under clause (iii).'';

(4) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by inserting after subclause (II) the following:

''(III)(aa) Upon filing, each petition under this clause shall be assigned to an investigative officer for adjudication and final determination of eligibility.

''(bb) During the adjudication of each petition under this paragraph, an investigative officer from a local office of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services shall conduct an in-person interview of the alien who filed the petition. The investigative officer may also gather other evidence so long as this evidence is not gathered in violation of section 384 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. The investigative officer who conducted the in-person interview shall provide to the investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligibility a summary of the interview and any other evidence gathered and a determination of the credibility of the interviewee and other evidence gathered.

''(cc) All interviews under this clause shall be conducted under oath and subject to applicable penalties for perjury.

''(dd) The investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligibility shall determine whether the petitioner had filed previous applicaions or petitions for immigration benefits that had been denied and whether the petitioner had been the beneficiary of a previous petition filed pursuant to this section that had been denied. If either was the case, the investigative officer shall consider the denials and the reasons for the denials as part of the adjudication of the petition.

''(ee) The investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligibility shall as part of the adjudication of the petition consult with the investigative officer at the local office of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services who had conducted the in-person interview of the alien who filed the petition.

''(ff) Upon the conclusion of the adjudication process under this subparagraph, the investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligibility shall issue a final written determination to approve or deny the petition. The investigative officer shall not approve the petition unless the officer finds, in writing and with particularity, that all requirements under this paragraph, including proof that the alien is a victim of the conduct described in clause (ii)(I)(bb), have been proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

''(IV) During the adjudication of a petition under this clause—

''(aa) the petition shall not be granted unless the petition is supported by a preponderance of the evidence; and

''(bb) all credible evidence submitted by an accused national of the United States or alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence shall be considered so long as this evidence was not gathered in violation of section 384 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

''(V)(aa) During the adjudication of a petition under this clause, the investigative officer who is responsible for the adjudication and final determination of eligiblity shall determine whether any Federal, State, territorial, tribal, or local law enforcement agency has undertaken an investigation or prosecution of the abusive conduct alleged by the petitioning alien.

''(bb) If an investigation or prosecution was commenced, the investigative officer shall—

''(AA) obtain as much information as possible about the investigation or prosecution; and

''(BB) consider that information as part of the adjudication of the petition.

''(cc) If an investigation or prosecution is pending, the adjudication of the petition shall be stayed pending the conclusion of the investigation or prosecution. If no investigation has been undertaken or if a prosecutor's office has not commenced a prosecution after the matter was referred to it, that fact shall be considered by the investigative officer as part of the adjudication of the petition.

''(VI) If a petition filed under this clause is denied, any obligations under an underlying affidavit of support previously filed by the accused national of the United States or alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence shall be terminated.''; and

(5) in subparagraph (B)(iii), by adding at the end the following: ''The petition shall be adjudicated according to the procedures that apply to self-petitioners under clause (ii).''.

SEC. 802. CLARIFICATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO U VISAS.

Section 214(p)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(p)(1)) is amended as follows:

(1) By striking ''The petition'' and inserting the following:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The petition''.

(2) By adding at the end the following:

''(B) CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Each certification submitted under subparagraph (A) shall confirm under oath that—

''(i) the criminal activity is actively under investigation or a prosecution has been commenced; and

''(ii) the petitioner has provided to law enforcement information that will assist in identifying the perpetrator of the criminal activity or the perpetrator's identity is known.

''(C) REQUIREMENT FOR CERTIFICATION.—No application for a visa under section 101(a)(15)(U) may be granted unless accompanied by the certification as described in this paragraph.''.

SEC. 803. PROTECTIONS FOR A FIANCÉE OR FIANCÉ OF A CITIZEN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 214 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''crime.'' and inserting ''crime described in paragraph (3)(B) and information on any permanent protection or restraining order issued against the petitioner related to any specified crime described in paragraph (3)(B)(i).''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)(B)(i), by striking ''abuse, and stalking.'' and inserting ''abuse, stalking, or an attempt to commit any such crime.''; and

(2) in subsection (r)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''crime.'' and inserting ''crime described in paragraph (5)(B) and information on any permanent protection or restraining order issued against the petitioner related to any specified crime described in subsection (5)(B)(i).''; and

(B) in paragraph (5)(B)(i), by striking ''abuse, and stalking.'' and inserting ''abuse, stalking, or an attempt to commit any such crime.''.

(b) PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO K NONIMMIGRANTS.—Section 833 of the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2005 (8 U.S.C. 1375a) is amended in subsection (b)(1)(A), by striking ''or'' after ''orders'' and inserting ''and''.

SEC. 804. REGULATION OF INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGE BROKERS.

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGE BROKER ACT OF 2005.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall submit to Congress a report that includes the name of the component of the Department of Justice responsible for prosecuting violations of the International Marriage Broker Act of 2005 (subtitle D of Public Law 109–162; 119 Stat. 3066) and the amendments made by this title.

(b) REGULATION OF INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGE BROKERS.—Section 833(d) of the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2005 (8 U.S.C. 1375a(d)) is amended as follows:

(1) By amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1) PROHIBITION ON MARKETING OF OR TO CHILDREN.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—An international marriage broker shall not provide any individual or entity with personal contact information, photograph, or general information about the background or interests of any individual under the age of 18.

''(B) COMPLIANCE.—To comply with the requirements of subparagraph (A), an international marriage broker shall—

''(i) obtain a valid copy of each foreign national client's birth certificate or other proof of age document issued by an appropriate government entity;

''(ii) indicate on such certificate or document the date it was received by the international marriage broker;

''(iii) retain the original of such certificate or document for 5 years after such date of receipt; and

''(iv) produce such certificate or document upon request to an appropriate authority charged with the enforcement of this paragraph.''.

(2) In paragraph (2)(B)(ii), by striking ''or stalking.'' and inserting ''stalking, or an attempt to commit any such crime.''.

SEC. 805. GAO REPORT.

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report regarding the adjudication of petitions and applications under section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(U)) and the self-petitioning process for VAWA self-petitioners (as that term is defined in section 101(a)(51) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(51)).

(b) CONTENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall—

(1) assess the efficiency and reliability of the process for reviewing such petitions and applications, including whether the process includes adequate safeguards against fraud and abuse; and

(2) identify possible improvements to the adjudications of petitions and applications in order to reduce fraud and abuse.

SEC. 806. TEMPORARY NATURE OF U VISA STATUS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 245(m) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1255(m)) is amended by striking ''the alien is not described'' and inserting ''the individual who was convicted of the criminal activity referred to in section 101(a)(15)(U)(i)(I) that was the basis for the alien being admitted into the United States (or otherwise provided nonimmigrant status) under section 101(a)(15)(U) was himself or herself an alien and has been physically removed to the foreign state of which the alien with nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(U) is a national, and if the alien with nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(U) is not described''.

(b) DURATION OF NONIMMIGRANT STATUS.—Section 214(p)(6) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(p)(6)) is amended by striking ''if the alien is eligible for relief under section 245(m) and is unable to obtain such relief because regulations have been issued to implement such section and shall be extended''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to applications for adjustment of status submitted on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, and to previously filed applications that are pending on the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 807. ANNUAL REPORT ON IMMIGRATION APPLICATIONS MADE BY VICTIMS OF ABUSE.

Not later than December 1, 2012, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report that includes the following:

(1) The number of aliens who—

(A) submitted an application for nonimmigrant status under paragraph (15)(T)(i), (15)(U)(i), or (51) of section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)) during the preceding fiscal year;

(B) were granted such nonimmigrant status during such fiscal year; or

(C) were denied such nonimmigrant status during such fiscal year.

(2) The mean amount of time and median amount of time to adjudicate an application for such nonimmigrant status during such fiscal year.

(3) The mean amount of time and median amount of time between the receipt of an application for such nonimmigrant status and the issuance of work authorization to an eligible applicant during the preceding fiscal year.

(4) The number of aliens granted continued presence in the United States under section 107(c)(3) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(c)(3)) during the preceding fiscal year.

(5) A description of any actions being taken to reduce the adjudication and processing time, while ensuring the safe and competent processing, of an application described in paragraph (1) or a request for continued presence referred to in paragraph (4).

(6) The actions being taken to combat fraud and to ensure program integrity.

(7) Each type of criminal activity by reason of which an alien received nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C 1101(a)(15)(U)) during the preceding fiscal year and the number of occurrences of that criminal activity that resulted in such aliens receiving such status.

SEC. 808. PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN OF VAWA SELF-PETITIONERS.

Section 204(l)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1154(l)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (E), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (F) as subparagraph (G); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following:

''(F) a child of an alien who filed a pending or approved petition for classification or application for adjustment of status or other benefit specified in section 101(a)(51) as a VAWA self-petitioner; or''.

SEC. 809. PUBLIC CHARGE.

Section 212(a)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(4)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(E) SPECIAL RULE FOR QUALIFIED ALIEN VICTIMS.—Subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) shall not apply to an alien who—

''(i) is a VAWA self-petitioner;

''(ii) is an applicant for, or is granted, nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(U); or

''(iii) is a qualified alien described in section 431(c) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1641(c)).''.

SEC. 810. AGE-OUT PROTECTION FOR U VISA APPLICANTS.

Section 214(p) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(p)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(7) AGE DETERMINATIONS.—

''(A) CHILDREN.—An unmarried alien who seeks to accompany, or follow to join, a parent granted status under section 101(a)(15)(U)(i), and who was under 21 years of age on the date on which such parent petitioned for such status, shall continue to be classified as a child for purposes of section 101(a)(15)(U)(ii), if the alien attains 21 years of age after such parent's petition was filed but while it was pending.

''(B) PRINCIPAL ALIENS.—An alien described in clause (i) of section 101(a)(15)(U) shall continue to be treated as an alien described in clause (ii)(I) of such section if the alien attains 21 years of age after the alien's application for status under such clause (i) is filed but while it is pending.''.

SEC. 811. HARDSHIP WAIVERS.

Section 216(c)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1186a(c)(4)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking the comma at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''(1), or'' and inserting ''(1); or'';

(3) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon and ''or''; and

(4) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

''(D) the alien meets the requirements under section 204(a)(1)(A)(iii)(II)(aa)(BB) and following the marriage ceremony was battered by or subject to extreme cruelty perpetrated by the alien's intended spouse and was not at fault in failing to meet the requirements of paragraph (1).''.

SEC. 812. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY PURPOSE.

(a) INFORMATION SHARING.—Section 384(b) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1367(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting ''Secretary of Homeland Security or the'' before ''Attorney General may''; and

(B) by inserting ''Secretary's or the'' before ''Attorney General's discretion'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting ''Secretary of Homeland Security or the'' before ''Attorney General may'';

(B) by inserting ''Secretary or the'' before ''Attorney General for''; and

(C) by inserting ''in a manner that protects the confidentiality of such information'' after ''law enforcement purpose'';

(3) in paragraph (5), by striking ''Attorney General is'' and inserting ''Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General are''; and

(4) by adding at the end a new paragraph as follows:

''(8) Notwithstanding subsection (a)(2), the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of State, or the Attorney General may provide in the discretion of either such Secretary or the Attorney General for the disclosure of information to national security officials to be used solely for a national security purpose in a manner that protects the confidentiality of such information.''.

(b) GUIDELINES.—Subsection (d) (as added by section 817(4) of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005) of section 384 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1367(d)) is amended by inserting ''and severe forms of trafficking in persons or criminal activity listed in section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(u))'' after ''domestic violence''.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security shall provide the guidance required by section 384(d) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1367(d)), consistent with the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b).

(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 384(a)(1) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 is amended by striking ''241(a)(2)'' in the matter following subparagraph (F) and inserting ''237(a)(2)''.

SEC. 813. GAO REPORT ON REQUIREMENTS TO COOPERATE WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS.

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report regarding the adjudication of petitions and applications under section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(U)).

(b) CONTENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall—

(1) assess the effectiveness of the requirements set out in Section 802 of this Act in ensuring that potential U visa recipients aid in the investigation, apprehension, and prosecution of criminals;

(2) determine the effect of the requirements set out in Section 802 of this Act, on the number of U visas issued annually; and

(3) determine the effect of the requirements set out in Section 802 of this Act, on the number of individuals seeking U visas.

SEC. 814. CONSIDERATION OF OTHER EVIDENCE.

Section 237(a)(2)(E)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1227(a)(2)(E)(i)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''If the conviction records do not conclusively establish whether a crime of domestic violence constitutes a crime of violence (as defined in section 16 of title 18, United States Code), the Attorney General may consider any other evidence that the Attorney General determines to be reliable in making this determination, including sentencing reports and police reports.''.

TITLE IX—SAFETY FOR INDIAN WOMEN

SEC. 901. GRANTS TO INDIAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS.

Section 2015(a) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–10(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''sex trafficking,'' after ''sexual assault,'';

(2) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''sex trafficking,'' after ''sexual assault,'';

(3) in paragraph (5), by striking ''and stalking'' and all that follows and inserting ''sexual assault, sex trafficking, and stalking;'';

(4) in paragraph (7)—

(A) by inserting ''sex trafficking,'' after ''sexual assault,'' each place it appears; and

(B) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(5) in paragraph (8)—

(A) by inserting ''sex trafficking,'' after ''stalking,''; and

(B) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(6) by adding at the end the following:

''(9) provide services to address the needs of youth who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, or stalking and the needs of children exposed to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including support for the nonabusing parent or the caretaker of the child; and

''(10) develop and promote legislation and policies that enhance best practices for responding to violent crimes against Indian women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and stalking.''.

SEC. 902. GRANTS TO INDIAN TRIBAL COALITIONS.

Section 2001(d) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) developing and promoting State, local, or tribal legislation and policies that enhance best practices for responding to violent crimes against Indian women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking.''; and

(2) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking ''individuals or''.

SEC. 903. CONSULTATION.

Section 903 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14045d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''and the Violence Against Women Act of 2000'' and inserting '', the Violence Against Women Act of 2000''; and

(B) by inserting '', and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012'' before the period at the end;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services'' and inserting ''Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of the Interior,''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and stalking'' and inserting ''stalking, and sex trafficking''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Attorney General shall submit to Congress an annual report on the annual consultations required under subsection (a) that—

''(1) contains the recommendations made under subsection (b) by Indian tribes during the year covered by the report;

''(2) describes actions taken during the year covered by the report to respond to recommendations made under subsection (b) during the year or a previous year; and

''(3) describes how the Attorney General will work in coordination and collaboration with Indian tribes, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of the Interior to address the recommendations made under subsection (b).

''(d) NOTICE.—Not later than 120 days before the date of a consultation under subsection (a), the Attorney General shall notify tribal leaders of the date, time, and location of the consultation.''.

SEC. 904. ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH ON VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIAN WOMEN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 904(a) of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–10 note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''The National'' and inserting ''Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, the National''; and

(B) by inserting ''and in Native villages (as defined in section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602))'' before the period at the end;

(2) in paragraph (2)(A)—

(A) in clause (iv), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in clause (v), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(vi) sex trafficking.'';

(3) in paragraph (4), by striking ''this Act'' and inserting ''the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012''; and

(4) in paragraph (5), by striking ''this section $1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 and 2008'' and inserting ''this subsection $1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 and 2014''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 905(b)(2) of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 534 note) is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2007 through 2011'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2013 through 2017''.

SEC. 905. ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRIBAL LIAISONS.

(a) APPOINTMENT.—The Attorney General is authorized and encouraged to appoint the Assistant United States Attorney Tribal Liaison appointed in each judicial district that includes Indian country to also serve as a domestic violence tribal liaison.

(b) DUTIES.—The duties of a domestic violence tribal liaison appointed under this section shall include the following:

(1) Encouraging and assisting in arrests and Federal prosecution for crimes, including misdemeanor crimes, of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking that occur in Indian country.

(2) Conducting training sessions for tribal law enforcement officers and other individuals and entities responsible for responding to crimes in Indian country to ensure that such officers, individuals, and entities understand their arrest authority over non-Indian offenders.

(3) Developing multidisciplinary teams to combat domestic and sexual violence offenses against Indians by non-Indians.

(4) Consulting and coordinating with tribal justice officials and victims' advocates to address any backlog in the prosecution of crimes, including misdemeanor crimes, of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking that occur in Indian country.

(5) Developing working relationships and maintaining communication with tribal leaders, tribal community and victims' advocates, and tribal justice officials to gather information from, and share appropriate information with, tribal justice officials.

(c) INDIAN COUNTRY.—In this section, the term ''Indian country'' has the meaning given such term in section 1151 of title 18.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

TITLE X—CRIMINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 1001. CRIMINAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO SEXUAL ABUSE.

(a) SEXUAL ABUSE OF A MINOR OR WARD.—Section 2243(b) of title 18, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(b) OF A WARD.—

''(1) OFFENSES.—It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly engage, or knowingly attempt to engage, in a sexual act with another person who is—

''(A) in official detention or supervised by, or otherwise under the control of, the United States—

''(i) during arrest;

''(ii) during pretrial release;

''(iii) while in official detention or custody; or

''(iv) while on probation, supervised release, or parole;

''(B) under the professional custodial, supervisory, or disciplinary control or authority of the person engaging or attempting to engage in the sexual act; and

''(C) at the time of the sexual act—

''(i) in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States;

''(ii) in a Federal prison, or in any prison, institution, or facility in which persons are held in custody by direction of, or pursuant to a contract or agreement with, the United States; or

''(iii) under supervision or other control by the United States, or by direction of, or pursuant to a contract or agreement with, the United States.

''(2) PENALTIES.—Whoever violates paragraph (1)(A) shall—

''(A) be fined under this title, imprisoned for not more than 15 years, or both; and

''(B) if, in the course of committing the violation of paragraph (1), the person engages in conduct that would constitute an offense under section 2241 or 2242 if committed in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, be subject to the penalties provided for under section 2241 or 2242, respectively.''.

(b) PENALTIES FOR SEXUAL ABUSE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 13 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 250. Penalties for sexual abuse

''(a) OFFENSE.—It shall be unlawful for any person, in the course of committing an offense under this chapter or under section 901 of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3631) to engage in conduct that would constitute an offense under chapter 109A if committed in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

''(b) PENALTIES.—A person that violates subsection (a) shall be subject to the penalties under the provision of chapter 109A that would have been violated if the conduct was committed in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, unless a greater penalty is otherwise authorized by law.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 13 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''250. Penalties for sexual abuse.''.

SEC. 1002. SEXUAL ABUSE IN CUSTODIAL SETTINGS.

(a) SUITS BY PRISONERS.—Section 7(e) of the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (42 U.S.C. 1997e(e)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: ''or the commission of a sexual act (as defined in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code)''.

(b) UNITED STATES AS DEFENDANT.—Section 1346(b)(2) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: ''or the commission of a sexual act (as defined in section 2246 of title 18)''.

(c) ADOPTION AND EFFECT OF NATIONAL STANDARDS.—Section 8 of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (42 U.S.C. 15607) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (e); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

''(c) APPLICABILITY TO DETENTION FACILITIES OPERATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall publish a final rule adopting national standards for the detection, prevention, reduction, and punishment of rape and sexual assault in facilities that maintain custody of aliens detained for a violation of the immigrations laws of the United States.

''(2) APPLICABILITY.—The standards adopted under paragraph (1) shall apply to detention facilities operated by the Department of Homeland Security and to detention facilities operated under contract with, or pursuant to an intergovernmental service agreement with, the Department.

''(3) COMPLIANCE.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

''(A) assess compliance with the standards adopted under paragraph (1) on a regular basis; and

''(B) include the results of the assessments in performance evaluations of facilities completed by the Department of Homeland Security.

''(4) CONSIDERATIONS.—In adopting standards under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall give due consideration to the recommended national standards provided by the Commission under section 7(e).

''(d) APPLICABILITY TO CUSTODIAL FACILITIES OPERATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall publish a final rule adopting national standards for the detection, prevention, reduction, and punishment of rape and sexual assault in facilities that maintain custody of unaccompanied alien children (as defined in section 462(g) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 279(g))).

''(2) APPLICABILITY.—The standards adopted under paragraph (1) shall apply to facilities operated by the Department of Health and Human Services and to facilities operated under contract with the Department.

''(3) COMPLIANCE.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall—

''(A) assess compliance with the standards adopted under paragraph (1) on a regular basis; and

''(B) include the results of the assessments in performance evaluations of facilities completed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

''(4) CONSIDERATIONS.—In adopting standards under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall give due consideration to the recommended national standards provided by the Commission under section 7(e).''.

SEC. 1003. CRIMINAL PROVISION RELATING TO STALKING, INCLUDING CYBERSTALKING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2261A of title 18, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 2261A. Stalking.

''(a) Whoever uses the mail, any interactive computer service, or any facility of interstate or foreign commerce to engage in a course of conduct or travels in interstate or foreign commerce or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or enters or leaves Indian country, with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person, or place another person under surveillance with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate such person and in the course of, or as a result of, such travel or course of conduct—

''(1) places that person in reasonable fear of the death of, or serious bodily injury to such person, a member of their immediate family (as defined in section 115), or their spouse or intimate partner; or

''(2) causes or attempts to cause serious bodily injury or serious emotional distress to such person, a member of their immediate family (as defined in section 115), or their spouse or intimate partner;

shall be punished as provided in subsection (b).

''(b) The punishment for an offense under this section is the same as that for an offense under section 2261, except that if—

''(1) the offense involves conduct in violation of a protection order; or

''(2) the victim of the offense is under the age of 18 years or over the age of 65 years, the offender has reached the age of 18 years at the time the offense was committed, and the offender knew or should have known that the victim was under the age of 18 years or over the age of 65 years;

the maximum term of imprisonment that may be imposed is increased by 5 years over the term of imprisonment otherwise provided for that offense in section 2261.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The item relating to section 2261A in the table of sections at the beginning of chapter 110A of title 18, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''2261A. Stalking.''.

SEC. 1004. AMENDMENTS TO THE FEDERAL ASSAULT STATUTE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 113 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

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

''(1) Assault with intent to commit murder or a violation of section 2241 or 2242, by a fine under this title, imprisonment for not more than 20 years, or both.'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''felony under chapter 109A'' and inserting ''violation of section 2241 or 2242'';

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking ''and without just cause or excuse,'';

(D) in paragraph (4), by striking ''six months'' and inserting ''1 year'';

(E) in paragraph (5), by striking ''1 year'' and inserting ''5 years'';

(F) in paragraph (7)—

(i) by striking ''substantial bodily injury to an individual who has not attained the age of 16 years'' and inserting ''substantial bodily injury to a spouse or intimate partner, a dating partner, or an individual who has not attained the age of 16 years''; and

(ii) by striking ''fine'' and inserting ''a fine''; and

(G) by adding at the end the following:

''(8) Assault of a spouse, intimate partner, or dating partner by strangling, suffocating, or attempting to strangle or suffocate, by a fine under this title, imprisonment for not more than 10 years, or both.''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking ''(b) As used in this subsection—'' and inserting the following:

''(b) In this section—'';

(B) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) the terms 'dating partner' and 'spouse or intimate partner' have the meanings given those terms in section 2266;

''(4) the term 'strangling' means knowingly or recklessly impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood of a person by applying pressure to the throat or neck, regardless of whether that conduct results in any visible injury or whether there is any intent to kill or protractedly injure the victim; and

''(5) the term 'suffocating' means knowingly or recklessly impeding the normal breathing of a person by covering the mouth of the person, the nose of the person, or both, regardless of whether that conduct results in any visible injury or whether there is any intent to kill or protractedly injure the victim.''.

(b) INDIAN MAJOR CRIMES.—Section 1153(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking ''assault with intent to commit murder, assault with a dangerous weapon, assault resulting in serious bodily injury (as defined in section 1365 of this title)'' and inserting ''a felony assault under section 113''.

SEC. 1005. MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCE.

Section 2241 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), in the undesignated matter following paragraph (2), by striking ''any term of years or life'' and inserting ''not less than 10 years or imprisoned for life''; and

(2) in subsection (b), in the undesignated matter following paragraph (2), by striking ''any term of years or life'' and inserting ''not less than 5 years or imprisoned for life''.

SEC. 1006. FEDERAL PROTECTION ORDERS.

(a) FEDERAL PROTECTION ORDERS.—Chapter 110A of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2262 the following:

''§ 2262A. Federal domestic violence protection orders involving Indians and Indian country

''(a) PETITION FOR PROTECTION ORDER.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A victim of an act of domestic violence, or an Indian tribe as parens patriae on behalf of the victim of an act of domestic violence, may petition a district court of the United States to issue a protection order against the person (whether an Indian or a non-Indian) who is alleged to have committed the act of domestic violence if—

''(A) the victim is an Indian or a minor who resides with or is in the care and custody of an Indian;

''(B) the victim resides or is employed at a place located in the Indian country of the Indian tribe that files the petition; and

''(C) the person against whom the order is sought is alleged to have committed an act of domestic violence in the Indian country.

''(2) CONTENTS OF PETITION.—A petition filed under this section shall contain—

''(A) the facts that meet the requirements under paragraph (1);

''(B) the name of each victim on whose behalf the protection order is sought;

''(C) the name and, if known, the residential address of the person against whom the order is sought;

''(D) a detailed description of the alleged act of domestic violence, including the date or approximate date and the location of the act of domestic violence; and

''(E) the relief sought.

''(3) ISSUANCE OF PROTECTION ORDER.—The court may issue a protection order in accordance with this section and subsections (b) and (c) of section 2265 and Rule 65(d)(1) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure if the court finds that such order is reasonably necessary to provide protection against violence, threats, or harassment against, contact or communication with, or physical proximity to—

''(A) a spouse or intimate partner who resides or is employed at a location in the Indian country of the Indian tribe involved in the proceeding; or

''(B) a minor who resides with or is in the care or custody of a spouse or intimate partner who resides or is employed at a location in the Indian country.

''(4) SCOPE OF PROTECTION ORDERS.—Any protection order under this section may—

''(A) prohibit the person against whom the order is sought from—

''(i) threatening to commit or committing an act of domestic violence against or otherwise harassing the spouse or intimate partner or minor who resides with or is in the care or custody of the spouse or intimate partner;

''(ii) communicating, directly or indirectly, with the spouse or intimate partner or minor who resides with or is in the care or custody of the spouse or intimate partner; and

''(iii) knowingly coming within a specified distance from the spouse or intimate partner or minor who resides with or is in the care or custody of the spouse or intimate partner;

''(B) direct the person against whom the order is sought to stay away from the residence, school, or place of employment of the spouse or intimate partner, or any other specified place frequented by the spouse or intimate partner, regardless of whether the residence, school, place of employment, or other specified place is located in Indian country; and

''(C) exclude or bar the person against whom the order is sought from the Indian country of the Indian tribe involved in the proceeding or any portion or area of that Indian country.

''(5) EMERGENCY EX PARTE ORDERS.—If a petition requests an emergency ex-parte protection order and from the facts alleged in the petition there appears to be a danger of a further, imminent act of domestic violence against a victim, the court may grant an emergency ex-parte protection order against the person against whom the order is sought in accordance with the requirements of section 2265(b)(2).

''(6) DURATION OF PROTECTION ORDER.—A protection order under this section may be permanent or of such other shorter duration as the court determines necessary to protect a victim from a further act of domestic violence by the person against whom the order is sought.

''(b) VIOLATION OF PROTECTION ORDER.—A person who intentionally violates a protection order under this section shall be punished as provided in section 2262(b).''.

(b) VIOLATION OF FEDERAL PROTECTION ORDER.—Section 2262(b) of title 18, United States Code, is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''this section'' and inserting ''this section or a protection order issued under section 2262A''.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—Section 2266 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after paragraph (10) the following:

''(11) ACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.—The term 'act of domestic violence' means an act or attempted act of violence or stalking, or a threatened act of violence, by a person against a spouse or intimate partner, or a minor residing with or in the care or custody of the spouse or intimate partner.

''(12) INDIAN.—The term 'Indian' means a person who is a member of any Indian tribe, regardless of whether that Indian tribe is the plaintiff Indian tribe under section 2262A.

''(13) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term 'Indian tribe' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 479a).

''(14) MINOR.—The term 'minor' means a person under the age of 18 years.''.

(d) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 110A of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2262 the following:

''2262A. Federal domestic violence protection orders involving Indians and Indian country.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. ADAMS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 4970, as amended, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. ADAMS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I'm proud to stand in support of this important and lifesaving bill.

According to national statistics, an average three women are killed by a

current or former intimate partner a day, every day, and 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner. For me, these statistics are way too real.

Some of you may already know that at the age of 17 I dropped out of high school and joined the Air Force. I soon married by 18 and had a young daughter. For me, it was a blessing, but I soon found out that the man I married had a penchant for drinking and was very violent when he drank. I gave him the chance to be the father I thought he could be, and it didn't happen. So I took my daughter, our clothing, and we left.

Like many women who leave an abusive relationship, there were times that the only thing that kept me going was knowing that I was responsible for my daughter, and she depended on me to make a better life for both of us where we both felt safe.

Years later, I experienced another side of domestic violence while working as a deputy sheriff for the Orange County Sheriff's Office. I encountered many victims who had been abused, whether it was from domestic violence, rape, or stalking. These victims were always victims. That's what victims are, all inclusive. Back then, issues like domestic violence and sexual assault weren't really discussed; they were hidden behind closed doors, leaving many of the victims to either underreport or not report at all. They didn't turn for help because they felt helpless. So when the Violence Against Women Act was enacted in 1994, it brought attention to an issue that was underreported, or maybe not even reported at all.

Eighteen years ago, VAWA established within the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services a number of life-saving grant programs for State, local, and Indian tribal governments. Since then, the act has encouraged collaboration among law enforcement officers, judicial personnel, and public and private sector providers to provide help for the victims of domestic and sexual violence. It also addressed the needs of victims of domestic and sexual violence who are elderly, disabled, children, youth, and individuals of ethnic and racial communities, including Native Americans.

Congress has twice reauthorized the VAWA grant programs with strong bipartisan support, once in 2000 and again in 2006. Keeping with the bipartisan nature of the act, the House bill, H.R. 4970, reauthorizes the grant programs in VAWA for a third time at the same funding levels as our colleagues in the Senate agreed to last month.

In addition to making several key improvements to the Senate bill, including nearly doubling resources for eliminating the backlog of unprocessed rape evidence kits, the House bill brings greater accountability to VAWA grant administration by ensuring that funding is spent on the victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and not on Washington bureaucrats.

To achieve these goals, H.R. 4970 requires that the inspectors general of DOJ and HHS conduct an annual audit of at least 10 percent of all VAWA grant recipients and limits the use of funds for OVW salaries and administrative expenses to 5 percent of the annual authorization. H.R. 4970 also requires the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to improve the coordination of grants within the Department in order to eliminate duplication and overlap.

Make no mistake about it: this is a victim-centered bill which includes all victims—an all-inclusive, victim-centered bill. Turning this reauthorization into a political issue is not only wrong, but it is dangerous. It is dangerous. We cannot allow domestic violence in this country to become a campaign issue. It must be a reflection of our best efforts as Americans united against breaking a cycle of violence and helping victims become survivors.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me today in supporting this life-saving legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, because it is a title that does not represent what it ought to underneath.

We've had these kinds of incidents before. In the past, we've always been able to set aside partisan differences and work together to protect the most vulnerable women of our society, abused and battered women. Today, unfortunately, this bill sets aside 20 years of bipartisan progress in our efforts to protect these women.

The bill, as amended by the manager's amendment, rolls back existing protections for battered immigrant women. It fails to include provisions from the bipartisan Senate-passed bill—which all the women in the Senate voted for—which protect native women's lives by authorizing limited tribal criminal domestic violence. It eliminates the language from the bipartisan Senate-passed bill that would help lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender victims of domestic violence receive Violence Against Women Act services without facing additional discrimination.

□ 1530

Now, I'm going to reserve my time here, but I want to just point this out: there are more than 300 organizations—women's organizations, law enforcement organizations, church organizations—that have registered their opposition to H.R. 4970 for the reason that I've suggested. The National Organization for Women, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, the American Civil Liberties Union, more than 20 faith-based leaders of organizations, the National Congress of American Indians, and it goes on and on, police chiefs, captains, detectives, lieutenants and prosecutors.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for all victims of domestic violence and oppose this dangerous proposal that is on the floor today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. ADAMS. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, first of all, let me thank the gentlewoman from Florida, who is a member of the Judiciary Committee herself, for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to cosponsor H.R. 4970, and I want to again thank my colleague from Florida, SANDY ADAMS, for her work on this legislation.

H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, provides funding for VAWA grant programs for 5 years at the same levels as the Senate-passed bill. There are only a few minor differences between this House bill and the Senate bill.

H.R. 4970 doesn't include language to provide special protected status to certain categories of people because they are already covered under VAWA. H.R. 4970 doesn't include language to allow Indian tribes to prosecute non-Indians because that is unconstitutional. H.R. 4970 does include provisions that prevent fraud and abuse in the immigration process.

This bill authorizes hundreds of millions of dollars for valuable services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Those who have supported VAWA in the past should be eager to support this legislation today.

Violence against women doesn't occur along party lines, and neither should reauthorization of these programs. Instead of working with Republicans in a bipartisan effort to protect women from domestic violence, rape, and stalking, some Democrats have chosen to place partisan posturing above the urgent needs of victims of violence.

If Members choose to oppose this bill for political reasons, that's their decision; but there is no good reason to oppose this bill for substantive reasons. A vote against this bill, in my judgment, is a vote against common sense and a vote against helping abused women.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds to remind my colleagues on the other side that the 200 or 300 organizations and people that oppose this bill supported the previous legislation. Now, come on.

At this point, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California, ZOE LOFGREN, a senior member of the committee.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Before today, every VAWA bill we've considered over the last 20 years had three things in common: they've all been bipartisan, they've all been written in consultation with the advocates and service providers on the front lines against domestic violence, and they've all increased protections for victims of domestic violence.

This bill, even as amended, shares none of those attributes. It actually reduces protections that exist in current law for victims of domestic violence, rape, and sexual assault. It was developed without any support or consultation from the minority or from the domestic violence advocates. And it is not bipartisan.

Now, the bill's opposed by every leading domestic violence organization. It's opposed by the National Association of Evangelicals and the Willow Creek Church, the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference, all the leading women's groups. It's opposed by law enforcement officials with years of experience fighting domestic violence. It's opposed by tribal authorities, immigration advocates, LGBT groups. The list goes on and on.

So the question really is this: If everyone from the National Organization for Women and Planned Parenthood to the National Association of Evangelicals and the Catholic Church have extreme concerns about this bill, who thinks this is a step in the right direction?

And as far as I can tell, the only groups who openly support the bill and the amendments are groups like SAVE and A Voice for Men, who align themselves, not with battered women, but with the men who abuse them.

I will insert into the RECORD an article from Leith Anderson, the president of the National Association of Evangelicals, and Lynne Hybels, the co-founder of the Willlow Creek Community Church. This is what they say:

Nicole came to the U.S. from Indonesia on a temporary fiancee visa, expecting to enjoy life as a spouse. Instead was trafficked.

They oppose the bill.

[From CNN, May 16, 2012]

PROTECT IMMIGRANT WOMEN FROM VIOLENCE

(By Leith Anderson and Lynne Hybels)

Nicole came to the United States from Indonesia on a temporary fiancée visa, fully expecting that she would enjoy life in a new country with the U.S. citizen she intended to marry. Instead, she found herself trapped as a victim of sex trafficking.

Nicole (not her real name), like thousands of other women, was forced to engage in commercial sex acts against her will. We heard about her when she received support from the Salvation Army STOP-IT Program in Illinois, which serves victims who have been harmed by the sex trade. (The Salvation Army is a denominational member of the National Association of Evangelicals.) Eventually, Nicole escaped from her trafficker and assisted law enforcement in the prosecution of the crime committed against her.

Though Nicole's fiancée visa had lapsed, leaving her susceptible to deportation, our nation's anti-trafficking law provided a legal option for her to be granted permanent legal status by helping law enforcement to prosecute her trafficker. With the help of a nonprofit legal service provider and the Salvation Army, Nicole was able to petition on her own for legal status—and obtain it—through a special ''U'' visa for immigrant victims of crime, allowing her to get back on her feet and begin rebuilding her life.

This week the House of Representatives is considering a proposal to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, first enacted in 1994, but in a new version that would significantly undermine the same U visa program that provided Nicole with safety and permanency in the United States.

The U.S. government estimates that as many as 17,500 foreign-born victims are illegally trafficked in from abroad each year, and academic estimates suggest that at least 100,000 victims of human trafficking live in the United States today.

By force, fraud or coercion, traffickers keep victims enslaved in prostitution or forced labor.

If the House proposal is enacted, thousands like Nicole could remain enslaved, too afraid to speak out because some of their most effective safeguards will have disappeared. The proposal introduced by Rep. Sandy Adams, R-Florida, would dramatically roll back important protections for battered immigrant women and their children. It could face a vote Wednesday afternoon.

Several provisions would leave immigrant victims of human trafficking and domestic abuse no legal way to break the cycle of violence in which they are trapped.

Specifically, this version would remove the incentive of permanent safe haven in the United States for women who help bring abusers to justice. By changing the U visa from permanent to temporary, the bill could validate an abuser's threat that a call to police could result in deportation. Many women would keep quiet rather than risk immigration consequences.

The bill would also allow abusive partners in domestic violence cases to provide input as to whether their victim should qualify for immigration relief, stripping confidentiality provisions that currently protect victims. Abusive spouses, who are in a position to petition to adjust the status of their immigrant wives through marriage, can choose not to do so as a tool of abuse and fear. Abusers frequently deny guilt and falsely accuse victims of fraud or abuse.

We don't want a bill that endangers some of the women and children it purports to help. Overall, this bill's proposed changes to current law would discourage immigrant victims from escaping abuse and reporting crimes, and make all of us less safe.

Women—and, often, their children—come to our churches for sanctuary and hope. We believe Adams' proposal would put more lives in danger. It would perpetuate abusers' use of immigration status as part of the cycle of exploitation.

As evangelical Christians, we are committed to Jesus' great commandment to love God and to love our neighbor, with a particular concern for those who are most vulnerable. Through local churches and ministries, we extend that love when we provide counseling and support for victims of human trafficking and domestic violence. In doing so, we point to the ultimate healing and restoration that we believe is found only in Jesus.

We also love our neighbor by speaking up when laws are proposed that could cause harm, intentionally or not. Loving our neighbor not only means reaching out to those in need, but also means addressing systemic problems that harm those in need.

That's why we're asking Speaker John Boehner and the House leadership to make sure that the Violence Against Women Act continues to protect vulnerable immigrant women who are victims of human trafficking or domestic violence. They need our protection.

Mrs. ADAMS. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO). She is a cosponsor of the legislation.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the sponsor of the bill, my colleague from Florida, for her work and her courage in bringing this forward.

I rise in support of H.R. 4970. Quickly, I'd like to tell a story about a situation in my hometown where a young boy was in the car with his mother. She was being beaten by her boyfriend, or her friend. She pulls the car over. He steps out of the car to try to flag somebody down to help his mother. He's 11 years old. He's hit and killed in the middle of a domestic violence situation. Tremendously tragic.

We know that sexual and domestic violence can happen to anyone at any age, race, income group, religion, or gender. Worldwide, one in four women is abused. In 2001, in my own home State, 13,000 domestic violence offenses were reported to law enforcement; and half of these offenses were between family members and household members, like that young man on the interstate that night. To be safe in your community, women first need to be safe in their own homes.

We have made great progress, I think, with the Violence Against Women Act that was enacted in 1994; but this current reauthorization builds on the successes of the last decade and will prevent more women and families from suffering. These women are our mothers, our daughters, our sisters, our friends, and our colleagues.

VAWA is working to break the cycle of violence in this country. And by speaking and lending a hand to our neighbors, our friends, our family members, we can break the cycle and take a vocal stand against abuse.

We've heard how this bill has been bipartisan in the past. It can be bipartisan right now. It can be bipartisan today. We can work out the difference. We can do the right thing. That's what we're here for, for that little boy on that interstate that night.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, Mr. NADLER has agreed to permit DALE KILDEE, the gentleman from Michigan, because of an emergency, to be recognized out of order for 1 minute.

Mr. KILDEE. I thank the gentleman for his courtesy.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill which is grossly inadequate in renewing vital protections for domestic violence victims. For the first time, we have a VAWA authorization that actually makes women less safe by taking away protections from previously covered groups like Native Americans living on reservations.

My Republican colleague will argue that this bill protects Native women by

giving them access to Federal courts, but in many cases the nearest Federal court is over 300 miles away. Do we really expect a woman who has just been abused to get in a car and drive 300 miles for protection? And even then there is no guarantee that a Federal prosecutor will do anything.

Every community in the Nation, except for constitutionally recognized tribal governments, has the authority to protect its residents. The only logical solution is to return local control to tribal governments to stop domestic violence before it escalates.

Instead of voting on partisan H.R. 4970, we should be considering the Senate bill, S. 1925, which included protection for Indian women.

□ 1540

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. BONO MACK), who is a cosponsor of this important provictim legislation.

Mrs. BONO MACK. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act, which is just as I did in 2000 and once again in 2005. It was a critically important bill back then, and it is a critically important bill now. That's why I am urging my colleagues today to stand up for all women in America.

I thank my colleague, SANDY ADAMS, for her very hard work and dedication and also for sharing her personal experiences and turning them into a reason to champion this bill.

Yet, Madam Speaker, despite a lot of hard work by advocacy groups, law enforcement, churches, schools, and so many others around our Nation, violence against women continues to be an alarming problem—murder, sexual violence, domestic violence. More than 1 million women in the U.S. will be victimized this year alone, and it's estimated that one in four women in the U.S. will experience domestic violence at some point in her lifetime. That's one out of every four women.

As a society, we can't seem to find a way to stop this terrible sickness, but this legislation gives victims and their families a safe place to turn for help, such as to community violence prevention programs; protections for victims who are evicted from their homes because of events related to domestic violence or stalking; funding for victim assistance services like grief crisis centers and hotlines; and programs to meet the needs of women of different races or ethnicities.

A vote for this legislation is a vote to protect women—not some women, but all women.

Madam Speaker, I am very proud to represent a facility sheltered from the storm in my congressional district, and I thank them for their hard work and for their dedication in helping victims of domestic violence.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from California, LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, for a unanimous consent request.

(Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. I rise in strong opposition to this bill.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). While I agree with my colleagues that we must reauthorize VAWA, I cannot support this version of the bill given the numerous ways it fails to protect women and families.

Despite the significant progress we have made as a nation addressing violence against women, nearly one-third of women in the U.S. still report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend in their lifetime. Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking lead to severe social, health, and economic consequences for our communities, with the estimated cost of violence exceeding 70 billion dollars each year.

Historically, each time VAWA has come up for reauthorization, Congress has added beneficial provisions to the bill and passed it with strong bipartisan support. In 2005, we included language referencing culturally and linguistically specific services to help eliminate barriers for many racial and ethnic minorities. My colleagues and I also successfully included a new health title in the last VAWA reauthorization that strengthened our health care system's capacity to prevent violence and develop effective interventions to abuse.

The version of VAWA before us today threatens to roll back those gains and limit protections for victims, ultimately endangering their safety in life-threatening ways. H.R. 4970 omits provisions in the Senate-passed bill that ensure equal treatment and access to services for LGBT survivors. It denies justice for tribal women abused by non-Indians, negating the reality that Native American women suffer domestic violence at epidemic proportions, but remain largely unprotected under current law. It also jeopardizes the personal security of victims who rely on public housing by forcing some to choose between swiftly moving away from an abuser and losing their housing subsidy.

Equally egregious, H.R. 4970 eradicates protections that have benefited immigrant women for nearly 20 years. The legislation creates barriers for immigrant crime victims seeking U-visas and silences those who fear deportation. H.R. 4970 overturns the current ability of immigrant victims of domestic violence to confidentially self-petition for permanent residency, thereby returning power to abusive U.S. citizen and legal permanent resident spouses who wield their status as a tool of dominance and control. Since VAWA's inception in 1994, nearly 75,000 self-petitions have been approved for immigrant victims who would have otherwise remained dependent on an abusive spouse to adjust their status. We cannot reverse course on this important self-petition provision and turn our backs on immigrant women and families.

I am also disappointed that, yet again, provisions to alleviate the economic factors that keep victims in abusive relationships have not been included. For the last 16 years, I have introduced legislation, the Security and Financial Empowerment Act (SAFE Act), to address this issue. The SAFE Act extends eligibility for unemployment benefits to victims forced to leave their jobs due to circumstances stemming from domestic violence, allows victims to take unpaid leave to make court appearances and seek necessary assistance, and it prohibits employers or insurance providers from basing hiring or coverage on an individual's history of abuse. These provisions ensure that domestic violence survivors have the financial security they need to escape an abusive situation. Failing to address these economic concerns is just another way this legislation fails to adequately protect survivors of domestic violence.

It's unfortunate that Republicans are playing politics with women's lives and pushing a bill that deviates so sharply from the kind of VAWA reauthorization that victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking truly need. Hundreds of organizations across the country have opposed HR. 4970 on the grounds that it harms our families and communities. Unconscionably, the GOP appears more concerned about advancing a political agenda than listening to the American people. This is grossly insensitive to the lived experiences of those who tragically find themselves in abusive situations and count on our support.

Victim safety is at the core of VAWA and always has been. I cannot in good conscience vote to pass this version of VAWA, as it erases 18 years of bipartisan efforts to respond to the needs of victims of domestic violence. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting this bill down so that we may consider an alternative VAWA reauthorization proposal that improves protections for all survivors, including immigrant women and other vulnerable populations.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I now yield 2 minutes to a senior member of the committee, the gentleman from New York, JERROLD NADLER.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, this is a partisan Republican bill that not only rejects the bipartisan reforms to VAWA that were passed in the Senate but that would roll back protections for immigrant women that exist in current law.

For example, with respect to immigration, the House Republican bill, even as amended by the manager's amendment, favors abusers by eliminating the requirement that abuser-provided evidence be investigated and corroborated before it can be used to deny victims protection. It also delays protection to battered victims by staying adjudications during pending investigations or prosecutions.

The bill also fails to fully address the astronomically high rates of domestic violence against Native American women. A major cause is jurisdictional. Tribal governments cannot take action against non-Native Americans who commit acts of domestic violence even on tribal land. The Senate bill, which passed with bipartisan support, would fix this problem. The House Republican bill ignores this issue.

Finally, H.R. 4970 fails to make VAWA fully inclusive. The bipartisan Senate bill would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the eligibility for grant programs under VAWA

so that groups could focus on victims amongst this underserved population. The Senate bill would also include sexual orientation and gender identity as classes in the new VAWA antidiscrimination language. The House Republican bill fails to include these provisions.

The bottom line is that House Republicans have taken the issue of protecting women from violence, which used to be bipartisan, and have made it partisan—just like everything else. Maybe women across America should not be surprised, as this majority has been waging a war on them since the beginning of this Congress. But, my friends, we do not have to let this stand.

I ask my colleagues to join me in voting against this bill. Let us reject this partisan VAWA reauthorization and work, as the Senate did, on passing a bipartisan measure—or better yet, simply pass the very good, bipartisan Senate bill. We don't need a retrogressive House bill that goes back on existing protections. The Senate did a fine job on a bipartisan basis. We should pass its bill.

Mrs. ADAMS. I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON), who is also a cosponsor of this important pro-woman legislation.

Mrs. EMERSON. Madam Speaker, in every State and every congressional district—I dare say in every community in our Nation—there is domestic violence. It's a tragedy, and it's often a silent tragedy in a home or in a situation where victims feel trapped. They need to know that the resources to help them are there, and the people who commit these crimes need to understand that the penalties for their abuses are severe. We all need to send the message that this law is important and that this Congress has zero tolerance for violence against women.

I've been to many shelters for victims of domestic violence in Missouri. They can't publish their addresses publicly. Still today, there is a network of women who can get you to a safe place, but you might not know who they are in your community until they save your life.

Domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse, and sexual assault are rarely discussed because they are such painful and shameful subjects, but they afflict women of all ages and from all walks of life. We can bring some small relief to all of the victims of these atrocities by speaking with one voice today and not trying to make this a political issue.

These crimes are not acceptable—ever. The criminals who commit them deserve every bit of the stringent punishments contained in this legislation, making any one of them think twice before raising a hand in anger. Giving one woman the courage to escape grave danger in her own home or sending one young person out into the world with an understanding of the seriousness of these crimes all make today in the House and this bill worthwhile. I urge the bipartisan passage of this bill.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased now to yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from California, JUDY CHU, a member of the committee.

Ms. CHU. As a former rape counselor, I've gone to emergency rooms and have seen the damage that sexual assault and domestic violence have caused. That is why I was so relieved when the Violence Against Women Act passed. And for the last 20 years, Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle have come together for legislation to protect women from violence. But not anymore.

Though the Senate passed a bipartisan bill to reauthorize VAWA, with the support of 15 Republicans, including every female Republican Senator, this Republican House bill differs greatly. It declares war on women. The manager's amendment tries to make some changes, but don't be fooled. They are just small tweaks designed to pull the wool over women's eyes. They are trying to sneak in a bill that still fails to protect all women, that leaves LGBT victims out, and that prevents Native American women from seeing their abusers prosecuted.

Let me be clear. This bill still rolls back existing law. For instance, with this bill, there is new, expedited deportation for any abused immigrant woman coming forth who has had even the slightest of errors in her report. If she goes to an emergency room and is in pain but has an error in her report, then she would be deported.

Let's make sure that this bill does not pass. I urge its defeat.

Mrs. ADAMS. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), who is a cosponsor of the legislation and the distinguished chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I can't believe what I am hearing on the other side of the aisle.

I was the author of the last reauthorization of VAWA. It passed this House 415–4. Many of the Members who are complaining about the inadequacy of the present law weren't around to try to strengthen it, and they didn't attempt to propose amendments. Instead, they seemed to have fallen for the contagion that started on the other side of the Capitol by expanding the scope of the law in a very controversial manner and by making an issue of whether a non-Indian can be prosecuted in a tribal court, which brings up huge constitutional issues because the Bill of Rights does not apply in tribal courts.

I don't think it is the authors of this bill, and particularly the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. ADAMS), who have anything to do with making this a partisan bill. It is the people on the other side of the aisle on both sides of the Capitol who have decided to use this as a political issue.

□ 1550

And there was one Member of the other body that said the Republican Party has declared war on women. That's not the case. This bill increases authorizations. It makes it more effective, and it limits administrative expenses so that the money is spent on victims. It really is a victims' rights bill.

If those who are up here complaining about this legislation and strongly opposing it cause its defeat, the first casualty of the war on women is going to be the most important bill that has protected women for the last 18 years, the Violence Against Women Act.

Madam Speaker, if the people on the other side are successful, the blood of the defeat of this bill will be on your hands, not on ours.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to remind my dear friend from Wisconsin, when he was chairman of the committee, in the 2005 Judiciary Committee report, he said:

> These protections are designed to ensure that abusers and criminals cannot use the immigration system against their victims, as abusers are known for interfering or undermining their victim's immigration cases and encouraging immigration officers to pursue removal actions against their victims.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished Member from Illinois, MIKE QUIGLEY.

Mr. QUIGLEY. I agree, it's not political, but the Senate had it right.

Every year we reauthorize this, we expand who we're protecting. The scenery is moving behind us, as well. We need to make sure we take those people into consideration. Strive as you might to avoid trying to protect LGBT victims, the Senate had it right, and we should do that here.

According to a recent survey of service providers who work with LGBT victims, 85 percent work with victims who have been denied services because of his or her sexual orientation or gender identity. Gender-neutral language is not sufficient. Gay men are not turned away from shelters because they're men; they're turned away because of discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

Discrimination is real. Violence is violence. Personal stories matter, but they should matter to everyone. Every one of these people are citizens of our country that deserve equal protection. Discrimination is real, and we can't pretend it doesn't exist or hope that we don't have to have—

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

Mr. CONYERS. I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. QUIGLEY. I know there are folks who don't want to, in any way, have a pro-gay vote on it, but this is protecting human beings. It's the right thing to do. It should have been in this part of the bill. I suggest everyone vote ''no.''

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, I yield 10 seconds to myself just to point out that the survey that we've heard about was received back, and the complaint was the lack of data that it received. I will remind my colleagues on

the other side that this bill and the current law protects all victims.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT), who is a cosponsor of the legislation.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012. And I would like to commend my good friend, Mrs. ADAMS from Florida, for spearheading this reauthorization. Mrs. ADAMS is a former law enforcement officer and knows the effects of domestic violence all too well and the chronic problems that we are faced with in this country.

We've all heard the statistics. The following are directly from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence:

One in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime;

The health-related costs of intimate partner violence equals at least $5.8 billion annually;

One in six women and one in 33 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape. Men aren't immune from this either;

Thirty to 60 percent of perpetrators of intimate partner violence also abuse the children in the household;

Domestic violence is one of the most chronically underreported crimes, for good reason.

These are difficult statistics, Madam Speaker, and they are certainly not easy to think about, but that's the reality we face in America. H.R. 4970 goes a long way to help the victims, their families, and law enforcement in working to lower those statistics by providing authorization for 5 years, enough time for agencies and departments to make plans and programs, as well as carry them through. Penalties for sexual assault and abuse are made stronger, improvements are made in emergency housing for victims, and great strides are made to end the backlog of testing rape kits.

I've been blessed to never have experienced this personally, but as a child, I witnessed it. My mother had a friend who ended up so violently attacked, so physically harmed, that she stayed at our house until she could finally get well enough, and my mother finally talked her into getting out of that environment. But that was the fourth or the fifth time that that lady, Rita, ended up staying in our house.

When I was a young adult having children, a friend of mine, again, had the same issue happen to her. What I realized was we didn't have anything in Clermont County to help them, but we had a homeless shelter that was very marginal. So I worked with the county prosecutor. You know I'm a runner. For 15 years, we put on a 5K to put money in the pot to keep that homeless shelter open so that women had a place to go.

Madam Speaker, we can't continue to go back on the backs of good volunteers in America. We, as a government, have to help these women, too. If we had those programs in place, Rita wouldn't have ended up in our house. She would have ended up in a place that could have psychologically and physically helped her. If we had had these programs in place, my friend Karen wouldn't have had to have been on the street, as well.

I urge my colleagues to face this reality head-on, and let's vote for this bill. It's time we do it for our women.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds.

More than 300 organizations oppose this bill, including the American Red Cross and the National Council Against Domestic Violence.

I ask the floor manager: Who supports it?

I yield 1 minute to a distinguished member of the committee, HANK JOHNSON of Georgia, himself a former magistrate.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4970, the so-called VAWA bill, also known as the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. It should be renamed WAWA, or ''War Against Women Act.'' This bill rolls back existing protections and is simply shocking in its callousness towards women and victims of abuse

Native American women, they are women, too. Three out of five are victims of domestic and sexual violence. They are murder victims at the rate of 10 times the national average, but yet H.R. 4970 denies protections to help those women. It also rolls back U visa protections for certain immigrant women who depend on their spouses for their immigration status. These women are particularly vulnerable to abuse. LGBT victims are excluded also.

Instead of this flawed bill, we should be considering the bipartisan Senate bill. And domestic violence does not recognize political parties. I urge House Republicans to come back to the table with a bill that we can all be proud to call the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012.

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE).

□ 1600

Mr. COLE. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 4970. The bill, as reported out of the Judiciary Committee, lacked provisions protecting tribal women. But Chairman SMITH and his staff, along with Leader CANTOR and Congresswoman ADAMS, worked with me to ensure that the protections for tribal women were added and included in this bill.

This bill does not change any existing authority that tribal courts possess but adds an additional tool in Federal court to combat violence against tribal women. The bill includes a mechanism for tribes to petition a Federal court on the victim's behalf, which is important to victims of limited means living in remote locations.

I support the tribal provisions of the Senate-passed VAWA and the provisions found in the SAVE Native Women Act, H.R. 4154, of which I'm a cosponsor. I believe that those provisions are, indeed, constitutional. But the protections found in this bill will have a positive effect in Indian country. These provisions aren't perfect, but they improve current law considerably. I support the progress made in this bill. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4970. We cannot improve a bill and strengthen tribal sovereignty if we can't get a bill to conference.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased now to yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON LEE, a senior member of the House Judiciary Committee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Why do we find ourselves here today having this kind of debate that calls upon the higher angels of all Members, recognizing that as I stand on the floor today, some woman is losing her life. She may be a Native American woman. That individual may be from the LGBT community or the immigrant community.

Why are we here today divided when all we needed to do was to work in a bipartisan manner? The Senate bill, which tracked the process and the strategy and the approach that we've used in all of the reauthorizations of VAWA; we have always expanded it to reach the needs of new victims. What do you say to a Native American woman when you limit the ability for that woman to be protected? In fact, in particular, you make it that much harder, for what you do is that it authorizes tribal governments to seek protection orders on behalf of victims with or without their protection or permission, violating the core principles that such victims must have autonomy. Why that language?

With respect to the LGBT community, my friends on the other side will say, They're already protected. But we realize that the clarity of the law gives the protection that is necessary when someone is desperate, because as the Federal Government passes laws, it permeates to counties and cities and hamlets that need to have the interpretation to ensure that the law is equally applied. So this is why we call for the passage of the Senate bill and a bipartisan bill.

And my friends on the other side of the aisle—seven Republicans wrote Chairman SMITH and said, We want the bipartisan bill. That's what we're asking for, not anything extraordinary.

When you talk about providing for rape kits and someone says on the other side, We've increased it to 75 percent to address the backlog—well, in actuality, they have not because they've taken money from some other programs. So, Madam Speaker, all I can say is, Why are we here? Let us stand united to help women. Let us not default on our allowance that we've

been given to serve the American people, and the women are desperate. Someone is dying as I speak.

Vote for the Senate bill. Let us do this in a bipartisan way.

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) who is also a cosponsor of this very good legislation.

Mrs. MYRICK. I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for bringing this bill forward and a special thanks to SANDY ADAMS for the incredible work she's done on this bill. It took tremendous courage on her part to produce a good bill in the face of tremendous relentless partisan attacks. Sandy has seen the challenges women face daily as a former law enforcement officer.

As a woman, I'm proud of this bill. It reauthorizes the Violence Against Women Act programs for 5 years and provides more than $600 million per year to help prevent domestic violence and protect those victims of abuse. For almost two decades, VAWA provisions have helped women across the country, and Congress needs to continue these important initiatives.

Most of us know of domestic violence situations that take place in our districts all the time, unfortunately. Again, unfortunately, this problem is increasing all across the country. The need for help is huge. So it's very important that we provide the resources to the women who are being abused, and they can have a place to go and someone to help them get through what has to be an absolutely horrible experience in their life. Thank goodness I have never experienced it.

Our bill offers significant improvements. There is greater accountability and transparency with the funding of these programs. We have strengthened the penalties against abusers, which is so important, and we've improved the services and protections for younger victims. Lastly, we've streamlined and updated the immigration provisions in the bill to address considerable fraud while still offering protections under the Violence Against Women Act, the statutes that are there to protect immigrant victims.

So I'm very proud to offer my support for the bill, and I'm very proud to be a cosponsor. I would urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this reauthorization.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to LINDA SÁNCHEZ, a distinguished member of the House Judiciary Committee.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to oppose this Republican bill that dangerously leaves victims of domestic violence worse off than they are under current law. To say that this legislation builds on current law is patently false.

Our Senate colleagues passed a strong version of the Violence Against Women Act with broad bipartisan support. Every Republican woman in the Senate voted in favor of it. Instead of crafting a bill of similar strength, my Republican friends in this body have insisted on taking back crucial protections for abused victims throughout our country. This Republican bill makes it more difficult for immigrant victims to work with law enforcement to report and help prosecute serious and violent criminals.

This Republican bill pretends the LGBT community doesn't exist and would allow victim service organizations to discriminate against LGBT victims when they seek help.

This Republican bill would further endanger the lives of Native American women who suffer abuse in epidemic proportions in this country. This Republican bill doesn't expand protections for women; it puts more women at risk by weakening current protections.

America's women deserve better. I encourage all of my colleagues to reject this Republican bill and support the Democratic alternative.

Mrs. ADAMS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. I am pleased now to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlelady from Minnesota, BETTY MCCOLLUM.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. I oppose this bill. For the first time, the Violence Against Women Act is now a divisive piece of legislation. We could be voting on a bipartisan bill already passed by the Senate, but instead, the Tea Party majority of the Republicans has chosen to bring a bipartisan discriminatory bill to the floor today, and it eliminates protections for victims of violent crime.

All women who experience violence have the right to be protected. They need to know that their attackers will be tried in a court of law. And the purpose of VAWA has always been to ensure that all victims of violence are protected and that all their basic human rights are upheld no matter what one's sexual orientation, ethnicity, or legal status in this country is.

This country failed to protect all women, and that's why this legislation failed to get the support from the advocates and from women all across this country.

I oppose this measure, and I encourage my colleagues to vote ''no.''

□ 1610

Mrs. ADAMS. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, how much time is remaining on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The gentleman from Michigan has 13¼ minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from Florida has 9½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington, RICK LARSEN.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Madam Speaker, in 2006, I, along with Senator CANTWELL, made sure that the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act, or IMBRA, was enacted as part of the last reauthorization of VAWA. It put regulations in place to protect foreign women brought here through the mail-order bride industry to keep them from falling prey to serial abusers.

Pushing this legislation forward 6 years ago was important to me because a young woman named Anastasia King, a so-called mail-order bride, was found dead. She had been strangled to death by her husband and buried in a shallow grave in 2000 in a wooded area in my district. Her husband had a domestic violence protection order issued against him from a previous wife. Indle King killed Anastasia because he wanted to get a new bride and didn't want to pay for a divorce.

The VAWA bill being considered in the House today does not go far enough to strengthen those same protections that we established in 2006. It leaves out important amendments to IMBRA that passed in the bipartisan Senate bill, like putting penalties in place to keep a man like Indle King from simply lying about his violent history so as to lure another woman here to be abused and then discarded.

We must use this reauthorization process to strengthen protections against abusers, not strengthen abusers' upper hand. We must use this reauthorization process to reaffirm that VAWA's protections are for all victims, including tribal women and LGBT individuals.

Mrs. ADAMS. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

This is the third time I have asked my friends on the other side to please tell me why all of the women's organizations, law enforcement organizations—some 200-plus—are against this bill, and all of them were supporting the previous bill.

I yield to the distinguished manager of the bill, a dear friend of mine, for a response.

Mrs. ADAMS. Thank you, Mr. CONYERS.

I will tell you, shame on them. Shame on them. This bill reauthorizes VAWA for 5 years at the same levels as the Senate. It protects victims.

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

Mr. CONYERS. I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

Since we're shaming on every organization that protects women, would you tell me who supports the Republican version of the bill? Name somebody.

Mrs. ADAMS. If the gentleman would yield, I can say that I do, and I know that we have a list of them.

I will tell you, Mr. CONYERS, that I have sat quietly and tried to behave here, but I am offended when I hear that this does not protect victims. I am offended when I hear that we are politicizing something that was politicized

on the other side in the other Chamber and by the other side of the aisle.

So I have very much concern about that because, as someone who has been in the situation, who has been on the scenes of these crimes, we are trying to reauthorize something that is very important to victims across our Nation—victims, not politics. And that's where I stand on this issue.

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

Mr. CONYERS. I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

I have asked why hundreds of organizations are supporting it, and you say: Shame on them. I ask who's supporting the Republican measure and you say: I am. Well, I'm glad to know that. And I think that just about tells everybody where the logic and the support for this bill is. There is none. It's a Republican—not a prank, but a serious blow to women. And that's what the organizations know, and that's why, Madam Floor Manager, they're opposed to this bill.

Mrs. ADAMS. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. I yield 2 minutes to ZOE LOFGREN, a member of the committee.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. I think sometimes it's helpful to get into the nitty-gritty of legislation. This bill changes the law that exists today and reduces protection for immigrant women in key ways. Let me just talk about one of the ways.

If you are an immigrant temporarily here, or even without your documents, and you are a victim of domestic violence and the police want to keep you here because you're a witness or they need your help in a prosecution, the police can obtain what is called a U visa so you get to stay here. That's in the current law. It was bipartisan. It was done in the year 2000.

This bill changes that in important ways. Under current law, if you are a U visa holder, you have the possibility of applying for a permanent visa. Why is that important? Because otherwise, if you come forward to cooperate with the police, you could be voluntarily deporting yourself and be separated from your children, and that is a deterrent to people coming forward to work with the police. That's why it was crafted the way it was. Even under the manager's amendment, there is a diminution of that possibility, and it would lead to absurd results.

I'll give you an example.

Under the manager's amendment, you can only apply for the residence if your abuser had been deported to the country where you are from. So a U visa is for 4 years. If your abuser is serving a 5-year sentence, you have to be deported, and then your abuser will come after you the next year. It's a stupid provision, unfortunately. I can't believe that that's the intended result. I know Mrs. ADAMS is sincere, but that's what is in the bill. And that's why people object to the bill—that, among many other provisions that will endanger women and take us back from where we were.

I think that when you take a look at not just the groups that support the Senate bill instead of this, but the groups that support this bill, who embrace abusers, you know where you need to stand—and that's not with this bill, despite the sincerity of the author.

Mrs. ADAMS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me first clarify. The bill requires that U visa holders actually assist law enforcement. Current law does not. Let's make that very clear. The other thing is we do want them to cooperate because we do want those perpetrators off the streets. We want to make sure they're off the streets so that no other victim is victimized.

In the earlier version of the bill, I was very concerned about: What about the next victim? If we do this and we don't address this, what about the next victim? Which victim doesn't make it out of that house? And I've heard my colleagues on the other side talk about how we're trying to do something because of immigration. No. We're trying to do something to protect the victims and the next victims if we don't get the circle of violence stopped. It always repeats itself.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to our leader, NANCY PELOSI.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for his leadership on this important issue, not only as this legislation comes to the floor, but for the past couple of decades on the subject. I commend the maker of our motion to accept the Senate bill, Congresswoman GWEN MOORE, for her sincere leadership on this issue as well.

Madam Speaker, 18 years ago, Members of Congress came together—some of us gathered in this Chamber right now—came together to make history with the original passage of the Violence Against Women Act. We helped ensure that no victim of domestic violence has to suffer in silence.

I want to especially salute our Vice President, JOE BIDEN, who was chairman of the Judiciary Committee in the Senate at the time, who worked with our chairman and many Members on both sides of the aisle to pass that legislation, again, making history.

□ 1620

The original Violence Against Women Act took domestic violence out of the shadows and shone bright sunshine on it.

In the years since, domestic violence has decreased by more than 50 percent—more than 50 percent. What a remarkable outcome. Twice in the intervening years we have come together in a bipartisan way to reauthorize and strengthen the law. This year our colleagues in the Senate acted similarly, passing a strong bill with a strong bipartisan vote of 68–1, including the support of every single woman in the Senate, Democratic and Republican alike. In doing so, they not only built on the history of the past, but they made progress for the safety of American women.

In sharp contrast, sadly, while it was a strong bipartisan bill in the Senate, and our substitute that we requested from the Rules Committee was to be able to put forth the Senate bill, so that would be the Senate Democrats and Republicans and House Democrats all in agreement, unfortunately in sharp contrast, House Republicans have brought to the floor today a bill that is controversial in that it will weaken the protections we have given to those who suffer domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

This legislation on the floor fails vulnerable people—members of the LGBT community, Native American women, and immigrant victims. All people deserve to be protected from domestic violence. There should be no exceptions to this law. We can't say women of America, we're passing a bill to protect you—not so fast in your applause if you happen to be a member of the LGBT community, an immigrant or otherwise, or a Native American woman.

Because the Republican bill is a step backward from the current law of the land, more than 300 organizations have spoken out in opposition, from the American Bar Association to the YWCA.

Local law enforcement officials have said that this Republican House bill ''will impede criminal investigations, undermine prosecutions, and interfere with victim safety.'' I repeat the quotation. The local law enforcement officials have said this bill ''will impede criminal investigations, undermine prosecutions and interfere with victim safety.''

Religious organizations such as the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and the National Association of Evangelicals have also expressed strong opposition to certain provisions of this legislation.

The many advocates and experts who work day in and day out on this issue, on the issue of domestic violence, have also opposed the House Republican version of the Violence Against Women Act. Republicans have chosen not to listen to the professionals in the field and are failing to give the many organizations serving battered women the tools that they need.

The Obama administration has said in their Statement of Administration Policy that the legislation ''rolls back existing law and removes long-standing protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault—crimes that predominantly affect women.'' That is why the President's senior advisers have said that they would recommend that the President veto this bill.

Today, this House of Representatives has heard powerful statements from women Members of Congress about the

need to pass a strong Violence Against Women bill. I hope that the safety of women will be high on the list of our colleagues as they determine their vote.

For nearly 20 years, the Violence Against Women Act has strengthened communities and provided critical lifesaving support to victims of violence. Because of this law, more victims get the help they need and domestic violence rates have decreased. Not only has VAWA saved lives; it has saved money. All Americans are entitled to feel safe, including in their own homes—every one of us. Yet too many women continue to live in fear. That is why we must strengthen, never weaken, the Violence Against Women Act.

And I want to commend the members of the Judiciary Committee, my colleagues on the House side, the Democratic side, who have brought such tremendous intellectual resource to this legislation, listening to those who minister to the needs of women who have been victims of domestic violence and to those who are trying to protect it.

I know that everyone in this body, Democratic and Republican alike, have the same goal, which is the safety of women. We not only want us to have the same goal, we want us to have the same goal for all women in America. And that's why we must strengthen, never weaken, the Violence Against Women Act.

Because this bill on the floor rolls back current law and fails to protect all victims of violence, I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

MAY 16, 2012.

UPDATED: MORE THAN 300 ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSE HOUSE GOP VAWA BILL

Today, the House will consider H.R. 4970, the House GOP Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Reauthorization bill. The bill is being considered under a closed rule.

More than 300 organizations oppose the House GOP bill, including such groups as the U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, National Network to End Domestic Violence, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, Break the Cycle, Legal Momentum, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, National Organization for Women, Feminist Majority, YWCA USA, AAUW, Business and Professional Women's Foundation, National Women's Law Center, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, American Bar Association, NAACP, National Council of La Raza, Human Rights Campaign, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and National Congress of American Indians.

The National Association of Evangelicals and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service are opposed to the immigrant provisions in the bill.

The Administration has also issued a veto threat on the bill.

MAY 16, 2012.

A VOTE FOR H.R. 4970 IS A VOTE AGAINST VAWA

DEAR COLLEAGUE: Please see below for the more than 320 groups and individuals who have written in opposition to key provisions of H.R. 4970:

1. Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.
2. Advocates for Human Rights
3. African Services Committee
4. Alachua County Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center
5. Alaska Federation of Natives
6. Alianza Latina en Contra la Agresión Sexual
7. Alliance for Immigrants Rights & Reform—Michigan
8. American Bar Association
9. American Civil Liberties Union
10. American Federation of Labor
11. American Gateways
12. American Immigration Lawyers Association
13. American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), Washington Chapter
14. American Jewish Committee
15. American Public Health Association
16. Americans for Immigrant Justice, Inc.
17. America's Voice Education Fund
18. Anindita Dasgupta, MA, Doctoral Candidate at the University of California, San Diego
19. Anita Raj, PhD, Professor of Medicine and Global Public Health at the University of California, San Diego
20. Artemis Justice Center
21. ASHA for Women
22. Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
23. Asian Pacific American Legal Center, a Member of the Asian American Center
24. Advancing Justice
25. Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence
26. Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach
27. ASISTA
28. Ayuda
29. Bangladeshi American Democratic Caucus of Michigan
30. Bangladeshi American Democratic Caucus
31. Boesche Legal Clinic, University of Tulsa College of Law
32. Boston University Civil Litigation Program
33. Break the Cycle
34. California Coalition Against Sexual Assault
35. California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
36. Caminar Latino
37. Campaign for Community Change
38. Canal Alliance
39. Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition
40. Captain Maria Alvarenga Watkins, (Retired) Metropolitan Police
41. Department, Washington, D.C.
42. Casa Cornelia Law Center
43. Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities
44. CASA de Maryland, Inc.
45. Casa de Proyecto Libertad
46. Casa Esperanza
47. Center for Family Policy & Practice
48. Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
49. Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc.
50. Center for Victim and Human Rights
51. CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
52. Central American Resource Center
53. Chief Brian Kyes, Chelsea Police Department, Massachusetts
54. Chief Pete Helein, Appleton Wisconsin Police Department
55. Christian Community Development Association
56. Church World Service
57. Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice
58. Coalition Against Religious Discrimination
59. Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
60. Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking
61. Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault
62. Community Action and Human Services Department
63. Community Action Network
64. Community Immigration Law Center
65. Connecticut Legal Services Inc.
66. Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
67. Community Refugee and Immigration Services
68. Community Solutions
69. Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.
70. Cris M. Sullivan, Ph.D., Professor, Ecological/Community Psychology, Associate Chair, Psychology Department
71. Detective Sergeant Robert Mahoney, Peabody Police Department, Massachusetts
72. Detective Shelli Sonnenberg, Boise Police Department, Idaho
73. Detective Stacey Ivie, Alexandria Police Department, Virginia
74. Domestic Violence in the African American Community
75. Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project
76. DREAM Activist Virginia
77. Education Not Deportation Project of the United We Dream Network
78. El Rescate Legal Services, Inc.
79. Empire Justice Center
80. Enlace Comunitario
81. Equal Justice Center
82. Esperanza
83. Esperanza Peace and Justice Center
84. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
85. Evan Stark, Ph.D., MA, MSW, Professor and Director of Public Health, School of Public Affairs and Administration, Rutgers University—Newark & Chair, Department of Urban Health Administration, UMDNJ—School of Public Health
86. FaithAction International House
87. Families and the Law Clinic, Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America
88. Families Against Mandatory Minimums
89. Families for Freedom
90. Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami, Inc.
91. Farmworker Justice
92. Feminist Majority
93. First Focus
94. Florida Coastal Immigrant Rights
95. Florida Coastal Immigrant Rights Clinic
96. Franciscan Action Network
97. Freedom Network (USA)
98. Fuerza Latina
99. Futures Without Violence
100. Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network
101. Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network (GAIN)
102. Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights
103. Gibbs Houston Pauw
104. Giselle Hass, PsyD, Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center, Center for Applied Legal Studies
105. Gulfcoast Legal Services
106. Haven Women's Center of Stanislaus
107. HAVEN, Oakland County Michigan
108. Hawai'i Coalition for Immigration Reform
109. Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
110. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
111. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society—Pennsylvania
112. Helene Berman, RN, Ph.D., President of the Nursing Network on Violence Against Women International
113. Holy Cross Ministries of Utah
114. Human Rights Campaign

115. Human Rights Initiative of North Texas
116. Human Rights Watch
117. Immigrant Defense Project
118. Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
119. Immigrant Legal Center of Boulder County
120. Immigrant Rights Clinic, Rutgers School of Law—Newark
121. Immigration Equality
122. inMotion, Inc.
123. InterCultural Advocacy Institute
124. Inter Tribal Council of Arizona
125. International Institute of the Bay Area
126. Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Clinic University of Florida
127. Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
128. Levin College of Law
129. Jacquelyn Campbell, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, Anna D. Wolf Chair, The
130. Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing and National Director, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Faculty Scholars
131. Jane Doe Inc.
132. Jay G. Silverman, Ph.D. Professor of Medicine and Global Health Division of Global Public Health Senior Fellow, Center on Global Justice University of California at San Diego, School of Medicine Adjunct Associate Professor of Society, Human Development and Health Harvard School of Public Health
133. Jewish Women International
134. Just Neighbors
135. Justice For Our Neighbors
136. Justice For Our Neighbors—Southeastern Michigan
137. Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
138. Kentucky Domestic Violence Association
139. Korean American Resource & Cultural Center
140. Korean Resource Center
141. La Fe Multi-Ethnic Ministries, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship/USA
142. La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians
143. Latin American Association
144. Latin American Coalition
145. Latina/o Bar Association of Washington
146. LatinoJustice PRLDEF
147. Leadership Conference of Women Religious
148. Legal Aid Service of Collier County
149. Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis
150. Legal Aid Society of Rochester, New York
151. Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association, Inc.
152. Legal Aid Society—Employment Law Center
153. Legal Momentum
154. Legal Services for Children
155. Leslye E. Orloff, J.D. Director, National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project, American University Washington College of Law
156. Lieutenant Carole Germano, Danvers Police Department, Massachusetts
157. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
158. Lutheran Social Services of New England
159. Mary Ann Dutton, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Georgetown University Medical Center
160. Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
161. Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
162. Maui International Language School
163. Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
164. Michigan Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
165. Michigan Indo-American Democratic Caucus
166. Michigan Muslim Democratic Caucus
167. Midwest Association of Farmworker Organizations
168. Midwest Association of Farmworker Organizations
169. Mil Mujeres
170. Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women
171. Mountain Crisis Services
172. Mujeres Latinas En Accion
173. Muslim Public Affairs Council
174. My Sister's Place (New York)
175. My Sister's Place, Inc. (D.C.)
176. Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence
177. NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
178. National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
179. National African Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network
180. National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
181. National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
182. National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
183. National Association of Evangelicals
184. National Association of Federal Defenders
185. National Center for Transgender Equality
186. National Center for Victims of Crime
187. National Coalition for LGBT Health
188. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
189. National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
190. National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
191. National Congress of American Indians
192. National Congress of American Indians Task Force on Violence Against Women
193. National Council of Jewish Women
194. National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
195. National Council of La Raza
196. National Council of Negro Women, Inc.
197. National Domestic Violence Hotline
198. National Employment Law Project
199. National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
200. National Hispanic Council on Aging
201. National Immigrant Justice Center
202. National Immigration Forum
203. National Immigration Law Center
204. National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild
205. National Korean American Service & Education Consortium
206. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
207. National Latino Evangelical Coalition
208. National Legal Aid & Defender Association
209. National Network to End Domestic Violence
210. National Organization for Women Foundation
211. National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault
212. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
213. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence and the Women of Color Network
214. National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women
215. Nawal Ammar, PhD, Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology
216. Neighbors in Support of Immigrants
217. NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
218. Network for Victim Recovery of DC
219. Nevada Hispanic Services Inc.
220. New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center
221. New Mexico Asian Family Center
222. New Sanctuary Coalition of NYC
223. New York Anti-Trafficking Network
224. New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
225. North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence
226. North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault
227. North Carolina Stop Human Trafficking
228. Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
229. Officer Michael LaRiviere, Salem Police Department, Massachusetts
230. Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence
231. Paso del Norte Civil Rights Project
232. Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center
233. Physicians for Human Rights
234. Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
235. Political Asylum Immigration Representation Project
236. Public Justice Center
237. Rachael Rodriguez, Ph.D., Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at Edgewood College
238. RAICES
239. Rainbow Services, Ltd.
240. Refuge House, Inc.
241. Refugio del Rio Grande, Inc.
242. Rhonda Giger, Prosecutor—City of Bothell, WA
243. Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
244. Ross Silverman LLP
245. Rural Women's Health Project
246. Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
247. SEPA Mujer Inc., Servicios para el Avance de la Mujer
248. Sergeant Inspector Antonio Flores, San Francisco Police Department, California
249. Service Employees International Union
250. Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network
251. Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center
252. Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine
253. Sexual Violence Center
254. Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S.
255. Sierra County Victim Assistance Unit
256. Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team
257. Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
258. Sisters of Mercy South Central Community
259. Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
260. Social Justice Action Network
261. Sojourners
262. South Asian Americans Leading Together
263. Southern Poverty Law Center
264. Stephanie J. Nawyn, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, Michigan State University
265. Student Action with Farmworkers
266. Supervising Deputy Sheriff Marcus Bruning, St. Louis County
267. Sheriff's Office, Missouri
268. Tahirih Justice Center
269. Tapestri, Inc
270. The Advocates for Human Rights
271. The Bridge to Hope
272. The Episcopal Church
273. The Immigrant Legal Resource Center
274. The Kansas/Missouri Dream Alliance
275. The Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights
276. The Legal Aid Society
277. The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County
278. The P.E.A.C.E*. Initiative
279. The Sentencing Project
280. The United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

281. The Violence Intervention Program
282. The William Kellibrew Foundation
283. TN Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
284. Transgender Law Center
285. UC Davis Immigration Law Clinic
286. UFW Foundation
287. Unidas, The National Latina LGBT Human Rights Organization
288. Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
289. United Methodist Church
290. United Migrant Opportunity Services
291. United Migrant Opportunity Services/UMOS Inc.
292. United Women.org
293. University of Miami, School of Nursing & Health Studies
294. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
295. VIDA Legal Assistance, Inc.
296. Vermont Immigration and Asylum Advocates
297. Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
298. Violence Intervention Program
299. Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations
300. Virginia Organizing
301. Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance
302. Voces de la Frontera
303. Voces Unidas for Justice
304. Voices of Immigrants in Action/Rural Women's Health Project
305. Voices of Men
306. Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans
307. Walnut Avenue Women's Center
308. Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project
309. Washington Immigration Defense Group
310. Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
311. WeCount!
312. Who Is My Neighbor? Inc.
313. Willow Creek Community Church
314. Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence
315. Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault
316. Women Against Abuse
317. Women of Color Network
318. Women's Crisis Support—Defensa de Mujeres
319. Women's Law Project
320. Women's Refugee Commission
321. Worker Justice Center of New York
322. Workers Rights Clinic
323. World Evangelical Alliance
324. World Relief
325. Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
326. YWCA USA

For further information on the overwhelming opposition to H.R. 4970, please visit the Minority Judiciary Committee web site: http://democrats.judiciary.house.gov/issue/materials-opposing-republican-violence-against-women-act-hr-4970

Or contact House Judiciary Democratic Staff, Ron LeGrand and Jenny Perrino.

We strongly encourage all colleagues to vote ''no'' on H.R. 4970 today.

Mrs. ADAMS. I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM), who is also a cosponsor of the legislation.

Mrs. NOEM. Madam Speaker, for nearly 20 years the Violence Against Women Act has supported programs that assist victims of domestic abuse, stalking, and sexual assault. I'm proud to support the legislation that's on the House floor today because it reauthorizes those programs, strengthens them by targeting more funding to programs that need it, and processing that needs it, and also gives some new provisions which I helped work on with the Judiciary Committee to better serve our Native Americans.

This piece of legislation which provides services to all victims without discrimination has always enjoyed broad bipartisan support. Unfortunately, because some in Congress saw an opportunity to use abuse victims as a prop in a political game, today we're having a different discussion, and I feel it's shameful. House Republicans are not going to allow the Violence Against Women Act to get sidelined because of politics. It's simply too important.

One area of particular concern to people back home in South Dakota is provisions for Native Americans and Native American women. Native American women suffer from higher levels of abuse than non-Indian women, but all too often they don't get to see their perpetrators brought to justice. It's simply unacceptable.

This Violence Against Women Act improves upon many of the programs that are designed specifically to aid Native American women, and it also includes new provisions to improve Congress's response to potential problems they may run into. Furthermore, to better ensure that Native American women have improved recourse against abusive individuals, I worked with the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the staff to include language in this bill to empower Native American women to either petition individually the Federal courts or through their tribal courts for a Federal restraining order. Ensuring that these women have the ability to obtain a protection order is a vital step towards stopping the cycle of abuse that many of them suffer through. It impacts disproportionately those in Indian Country over other areas of the Nation.

Those who have suffered from violence and abuse have gone through enough. Let's not cause more harm by putting politics before victims, and let's support and reauthorize the improved Violence Against Women Act today.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Ladies and gentlemen of the House, in fact, the new tribal protection orders added by the manager's amendment would reverse the Violence Against Women Act's victim-centered approach and would require Native women to sometimes travel hours to obtain protection orders from a Federal district court.

Madam Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 4 minutes to the distinguished whip of the House of Representatives, STENY HOYER of Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the distinguished ranking member from Michigan who has been such an extraordinary fighter for the rights of all people in our country, and I rise in opposition to this bill.

□ 1630

I would say, as an aside, the last speaker talked about Native Americans. The National Congress of American Indians of course says this matter does nothing to address the crux of the issue—the lack of local authority to handle misdemeanor-level domestic and dating violence when the perpetrator is non-Indian. It goes on to oppose this legislation.

I rise in sadness, Madam Speaker. I was the cosponsor of the original Violence Against Women Act in 1994. We passed a bipartisan bill that has helped law enforcement significantly reduce domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

While great progress has been made, unfortunately one in three American women still experience violence by a partner, stalking, or sexual assault. That's why this bill is a perfect example of why we need to work together in a bipartisan fashion to reauthorize and strengthen the Violence Against Women Act. I will tell my friends the Senate did this. Why is it that we have to choose disunity and confrontation over consensus? I don't know why that is, particularly on an issue of this great importance to the American people.

The Senate came together, 68 of them—two-thirds of the United States Senate, Republicans and Democrats, overwhelmingly supported this. Every woman in the United States Senate supported the Senate bill—everyone, Republican women and Democratic women, who know firsthand the crisis that confronts our communities.

However, this version was reported by the Judiciary Committee with no bipartisan support—and indeed bipartisan opposition. Why do we have to do that? We could have come together. We should have come together. The Senate came together. There is no reason we can't, other than to make our points on a partisan basis.

This bill is weaker than existing law, it is regressive, and it sends the wrong message about our values. The Senate's version extends new protections to Native Americans and to all who are targeted, regardless of sexual orientation. Isn't that our value, to protect every individual? ''We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all individuals are endowed by their Creator.'' Shouldn't we protect all individuals, not exclude some?

Not only does the House version fail to include those protections, it also makes it harder for law enforcement to encourage immigrant victims to come forward to seek help and justice. I met with over 30 members of the law enforcement community on Monday. We sat around and we talked about, generally, gang violence, but we talked about VAWA. We talked about the ability of people to come forward and make complaints, feel comfortable in doing that, and enhance the ability to get domestic defenders out of the cycle of violence against domestic partners or

others. They all agreed that we ought to make it easier, not harder. We make it harder in this bill. This is not the right way to go.

This version is opposed by hundreds of groups. I've got a list here. I'm not going to read it. Leader PELOSI submitted it for the RECORD. Hundreds of groups are opposed to this legislation, including the American Bar Association, and are urging a ''no'' vote.

I'm going to vote ''no'' on this, and I hope all my colleagues do as well so that we can adopt a bill that has overwhelming bipartisan support and the support of these groups. Why do we confront these groups and say: Nope, you're wrong, we know better; we know better; you've worked on this for years and decades, but we're going to go our own way?

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

Mr. CONYERS. I am pleased to yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

This version is opposed, as I said, by hundreds of groups representing victims, advocates, faith-based organizations, as well as law enforcement.

Now, almost every one of us, every one of us—or most, I imagine—has had some personal experience with this. In our own families, ourselves, as lawyers, as doctors, as neighbors, as friends, as fellow church members, we all know the cost of this violence. Let us come together and act together.

This should not be a vehicle for partisan confrontation. Instead, we should adopt the Senate's bipartisan version and ensure that law enforcement agencies have the tools they need to prevent domestic violence and provide victims with the assistance they need.

Let us vote ''no'' on this legislation, and then let us move forward in a bipartisan, constructive, overwhelmingly supported fashion like our colleagues in the United States Senate did in a bipartisan way.

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just say that I agree that all victims need to be covered, and that is what this piece of legislation does. We do not segment out. We do not pit victim against victim. It is all victims.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield now 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA).

Mr. BECERRA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, 2 out of every 10 women in America will be a victim of rape in her lifetime. More than that will experience severe physical violence by an intimate partner. Madam Speaker, which one of those women is not worthy of protection or support as a result of this legislation?

H.R. 4970 is opposed by tribal governments because Native American women will have less protection under this bill. H.R. 4970 is opposed by groups that support immigrants because immigrant women will find themselves victims of these crimes without the support that they need. And the community of LGBT Americans will find themselves without the support they would get under the Senate version of this legislation.

Once again, the House majority demonstrates the dysfunction in Washington, D.C. Instead of applauding the overwhelming vote in the Senate with a bipartisan vote that passed just recently by 68 votes in the Senate for a Violence Against Women Act to be reauthorized and putting that bipartisan bill on this floor, our Republican colleagues in the House went the other way.

Madam Speaker, it is time for us to put the Senate bill on the floor, get this work done, follow the lead of the American public that says: Get to work, make it happen, and protect women who are the victims of violence in this country.

Mrs. ADAMS. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 1¼ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from Florida has 5¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. CONYERS. I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN).

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam Speaker, it's with great disappointment that I rise today in opposition to this bill, not because the issue of violence against women is not real, but because this House bill does not do enough to address domestic violence and protect women.

Sadly, instead of taking action on a bipartisan bill that has passed the Senate that meets the need to protect America's women, the Republican majority has chosen confrontation over compromise with a bill that is seriously limited, particularly in the protections it offers to Native American women.

It was my great hope that the House Republicans would rise to do the right thing. Don't hide behind excuses—do the right thing. Let's close the loophole that allows abusers to get away with violence, especially against Native American women. It's not right that abusers game these loopholes to beat their victims. Reject this bill and take up the Senate version.

Mrs. ADAMS. I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has three-quarters of a minute remaining.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker and Members of the House, this bill has been revealed to be reauthorizing certain grant programs, but it really doesn't. It undermines the safety of the most vulnerable victims of violence. It rolls back important protections for immigrant victims, putting them in a worse position than under current law, and excludes other vulnerable populations, such as tribal women, LGBTQ. In short, any alleged improvements made by this bill cannot conceal the overwhelming harm that it will cause.

When I asked who supports this bill, the floor manager could name only one person. She said, I do. And when I asked her why do all of the women's organizations and law enforcement organizations oppose the bill, she made some other comment about why that was so.

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Ladies and gentlemen, we must turn back this unacceptable piece of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. ADAMS. I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GOWDY), my dear friend, a former Federal prosecutor and an original cosponsor of this bill.

Mr. GOWDY. Nell Lindsey was a nurse at a local hospital. Her shift had ended, and it was time to go home. She couldn't take her own car because her husband had disabled the car so it wouldn't work. This is the same husband who had broken her jaw on a family vacation, the same husband who had knocked out her teeth in an Applebee's parking lot while her children watched, the same husband who had called their oldest son a sexual-orientation epithet, and put beer in the baby bottle of their youngest child.

So Nell Lindsey got a ride home from the hospital from work with a friend of hers. And as they were headed home, they saw an ominous sight, Madam Speaker. They saw the car of her estranged husband. Now, he had been ordered to stay away from her, Madam Speaker, but he didn't care. And there was a conditional bond to stay away from her, but he didn't care. And there was a court order, an order of protection to stay away from her, but he didn't care.

And when Nell Lindsey and her friend saw that ominous sight of Marion Lindsey in a car, they did a very smart thing, Madam Speaker. They headed straight for the Inman Police Department. And they're jumping over railroad tracks, and they're running stop signs, and they're running red lights. And Nell gets out her cell phone and she calls 911. And she says, Please help, please help.

So they pull into the back parking lot of the Inman Police Department, and she still has the cell phone to her ear, and through the audiotape that we played at trial, Madam Speaker, you could hear Nell Lindsey saying, Please help, please help. And then you heard four gunshots. And when they took her body out of the back seat of that car, she still had the cell phone in her hand.

The system failed Nell Lindsey, Madam Speaker. She did everything we tell battered and abused women to do. The courts couldn't save her, the prosecutors couldn't save her. Her husband's on death row, but that doesn't

save her. But even in her death, Madam Speaker, she did something good because she spawned changes in South Carolina in the way that we treat violence against women.

And with the help of Violence Against Women grants, like the ones that are at jeopardy today, with the help of those grants, and a woman named Lynn Hawkins, who I must concede, Madam Speaker, does not share my political ideology in any way, shape, or form, but she put the political sloganeering and the bumper stickers behind and she said, let's change the system in South Carolina, and we did it. It wasn't in time to save Nell Lindsey, but it was in time to save a graveyard full of other women in our State.

So I'm going to ask simply this, Madam Speaker: Can we stop the election-year gimmicks? Can we stop these manufactured wars that pit one group of Americans against another group of Americans?

I spent 16 years prosecuting men who raped, stabbed, strangled, shot, and killed women. I have a mother, a wife, a daughter, three sisters, and the images of countless women indelibly imprinted on my mind because they were killed by men who claimed to care about them.

This is not about politics to me. If you want to make women safer, then change the way we draw juries, change the discovery rules, improve the rape shield statute. But stop focusing on November's election for just one afternoon and wonder with me what good we can accomplish if we will stop the political games, and if we could pick up some humanity and embrace the fact that, even in a political environment as dysfunctional as this one, we can find common ground when it comes to fighting for those who have no voice, who have nobody to stand up for them.

Madam Speaker, the political games have to stop, at least for a day. They have to stop. If this bill fails, it will be because those on the other side were so bent on making a point that they stopped caring about making a difference.

Madam Speaker, the Senate bill is fundamentally and constitutionally flawed. Further, to say, Madam Chair, it continues to pit one group of Americans against another group of Americans solely for political reasons. Lady Justice doesn't do that, and politicians shouldn't do it either. I urge support for this bill.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4970, the House Majority's version of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, which eliminates important protections for women that have been supported on a bipartisan basis for many years.

The tragedy of domestic violence is a reality for many families in our country and around the world. Unfortunately, it likely touches someone we know. Domestic violence affects people at all income levels, ethnicities, and ages.

Since its enactment in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) has been improved with each renewal in 2000 and 2005.

It has been done on a bipartisan basis. The Senate's 2012 VAWA reauthorization bill passed by a 68–31 margin.

The same cannot be said for this bill, which barely passed the House Judiciary Committee by a 17–15 vote along mostly partisan lines. Rather than addressing serious gaps in protection and services, H.R. 4970 rolls back critical safeguards that have long been part of this law and repeals current law requiring abuser-submitted evidence to be corroborated before it can be used against a victim. These safeguards were included as part of previous reauthorizations and are included in S. 1925, the Senate's 2012 bipartisan reauthorization bill. With these provisions stripped, H.R. 4970 leaves countless women, including LGBT, immigrant, and American Indian victims at risk.

The bill puts abused immigrant women at increased risk by imposing new, burdensome procedural hurdles that would delay or deny protections and put victims in a more vulnerable position than they would be under current law. Law enforcement groups, including the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, the National District Attorneys Association, and National Association of Attorneys General support provisions in current law and in the Senate bill that protect immigrant women and help police and prosecutors pursue cases against dangerous perpetrators.

The House Majority's VAWA reauthorization would abolish significant enhancements contained in the bipartisan Senate bill. For LGBT victims of domestic violence, H.R. 4970 fails to prohibit discrimination and ensure equal access to services. This bill would do away with provisions designed to provide justice to American Indian women by eliminating provisions empowering tribes with jurisdiction to prosecute non-Indian perpetrators on their lands.

Our Nation's most vulnerable victims of violence stand to lose from this reauthorization should it become law. I am dismayed to see that some could actually support legislation that provides protections for abusers rather than the abused. I urge my colleagues to reject H.R. 4970.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. This controversial bill would weaken long-standing protections and fails to protect the most vulnerable victims of violence.

Last month, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. Instead of supporting the bipartisan Senate bill, House Republicans introduced a dangerous partisan bill that rolls back many vital protections for battered women and shifts the power into the hands of abusers. This bill fails to protect battered immigrant spouses legally here, diminishes protections for the LGBT community, and neglects challenges facing Native American victims. It is a slap in the face to victims and those who have worked tirelessly to protect them.

One out of every four women in the United States is physically assaulted by an intimate partner and more than 740,000 children and youth are treated in hospital emergency departments as a result of violence each year—more than 84 every hour. In Texas, last year the number of family violence fatalities increased 28 percent from 2010. In El Paso, Texas according to the El Paso Police Department, police responded to 200 reports of sexual assault and 4,500 domestic violence cases just last year.

These numbers indicate the severity of a widespread problem that can have devastating social and health-related consequences and this bill will only weaken the confidentiality provisions for victims seeking protection from further violence. This bill reverses the ''U'' visa program that encourages immigrant victims of crime to report and help prosecute serious criminal activity and now will create obstacles for those seeking to report crimes. Now immigrant victims will be far less likely to share potentially valuable information with police that could help solve crimes and prosecute offenders.

Republicans in the House should drop their misguided attempt to undermine the Violence Against Women Act that puts the safety and security of women at risk and instead should reauthorize and strengthen the existing program, as the Senate has already done. House Republicans should be ashamed of politicizing such an important issue and for attempting to roll back longstanding bipartisan protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence.

As the National Organization for Women has stated, this bill ''disregards the biases and disrespect that certain victims face when seeking help from the criminal justice system and access to lifesaving services, effectively giving second-class treatment to Native American, immigrant women, and LGBT victims. The bill smacks of willful ignorance of the problem and hostility to people deemed not to be 'true' victims.'' I fully support this statement because the fact of the matter is, violence is violence, regardless of who the victim is.

As a husband, father, and grandfather to four wonderful women, this issue is very important to me. If there is any issue where we should all agree, it is to help stop domestic and sexual violence, and to protect all victims. This should not be a political issue, but a matter of protecting those whom are most vulnerable. I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this partisan measure.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, today I rise in opposition to H.R. 4970, and I encourage the majority to instead take up the bipartisan version of the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization that passed the Senate. I would like to thank my colleague, GWEN MOORE for her steadfast and unyielding work on this issue, and I was proud to join her as a cosponsor of the version of the VAWA reauthorization that she introduced in the House.

Since 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has been reauthorized without controversy, almost entirely devoid of any partisan rancor or division. It is an essential piece of legislation that seeks to protect the victims of abuse and offer them much-needed support. Since its original passage, and during each of the previous reauthorizations, Congress has continued to improve the VAWA by increasing protections for women every time it has come to the floor.

This year, both the bipartisan Senate bill and Congresswoman MOORE's bill offer reforms that make certain that when we pass a law that protects all women, we mean all

women—with no exceptions. The reauthorization should include the new language proposed in those bills which would guarantee that the law will not discriminate against any woman based on her race, color, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

Madam Speaker, it is my hope that my Republican colleagues will end this partisan gamesmanship on an issue that has always been, and should always be a bipartisan one. I join my colleagues, as well as hundreds of organizations and groups, and women across the country in opposing this bill.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to work with us to pass the bipartisan Senate bill which ensures equal protection to all women in the United States of America.

Mr. DICKS. Madam Speaker, I believe every Member of the House supports the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. However, I oppose the bill we are considering today because it contains serious gaps in its protections for Native American victims of domestic violence and it does not include language to ban discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered victims in grant programs under the bill.

The bill fails to grant the tribal police and courts, generally the closest legal authorities for an alleged incident of domestic violence occurring on a reservation, the authority to address an incident occurring on tribal lands. Instead, tribal residents in my district would be forced to rely on Federal courts, located several hours away in Tacoma and Seattle, for help and protection. This puts a terrible and potentially dangerous burden on Indian victims in need of a protection order, many of whom do not have the means to travel this distance. Furthermore, the requirement forcing a victim to disclose her residential address called for in Section 1006 of the bill may well put her in further jeopardy.

I am also deeply concerned about the bill's refusal to prohibit discrimination against LGBT individuals in all VAWA programs. No victim of violence of any kind should be denied assistance simply because his or her sexual orientation. It is wrong that the bill further perpetuates this inequity, and I fear the reasons are purely political.

The answer to this problem is simple. A bipartisan compromise reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act passed the other body with 68 votes in favor, including 15 Republicans. It resolved these issues in a way that was acceptable to both sides, and I encourage the leadership in the House to allow this bill to come to the floor for a vote immediately.

I urge my colleagues to reject this flawed bill and to push for the consideration of a truly bipartisan reauthorization bill before the week is out.

Mr. MORAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in reluctant but strong opposition to H.R. 4970, a needlessly partisan reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that unwisely undermines important protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Initially enacted in 1994, VAWA acknowledges the harmful and persistent impact that domestic violence, sexual assault, and dating violence has on our society. Nearly one in four women are the victims of rape or abuse by a partner during adulthood, with young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experiencing the highest rate of partner violence. One in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before the age of 18, half of whom are victims of incest. Nationwide, approximately three women are killed each day by a current or former intimate partner.

In addition to the physical and emotional trauma experienced by victims, domestic violence and sexual assaults impose a tremendous economic cost on our nation. Rape is the most costly crime to its victims, totaling $127 billion a year in medical costs, lost earnings, and diminished quality of life. The cost of intimate partner violence exceeds $5.8 billion, including $4.1 billion in direct health care expenses. Over 25 percent of domestic violence victims report that they lost a job, at least in part, because of this violence. In total, domestic violence is estimated to cost employers in the U.S. up to $13 billion every year.

To address this staggering problem, VAWA established streamlined programs to provide law enforcement, judges and prosecutors, and social service providers with the resources they need to hold offenders accountable and support the needs of victims. It allowed for coordinated, community-based services for victims and strengthened housing protections. VAWA also created important prevention programs for young people and improved the response to violence against Native American women and those in underserved communities. The tangible results of VAWA are impressive and should make all Americans proud.

Since 1994, reporting of domestic violence has increased by as much as 51 percent, while the number of individuals killed by an intimate partner has decreased 34 percent for women and 57 percent for men. States have enacted important protections for victims of stalking and strengthened rape laws in response to VAWA. Many more victims of domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault are able to access critical services. An entire generation of justice system professionals now understands that our society cannot tolerate these crimes. In just the first six years after enactment, VAWA saved an estimated $12.6 billion in net averted costs.

Yet, the bill before us today betrays the bipartisan history of VAWA. It fails to contain important reforms included in a Senate-passed version of the bill that ensure LGBT, Native American, and immigrant women receive the protections they deserve. The bill lacks protections for LGBT survivors despite the fact that studies have clearly shown that these individuals are underserved explicitly because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. It fails to provide American Indian women effective recourse to bring justice against non-Indian abusers, even though these women face rates of victimization more than double that of non-Indian women. And the bill, for the first time ever, weakens protections in current law for migrant victims of violence. The bill would leave immigrant victims without meaningful access to protection, create processing delays that will keep women in life-threatening situations for longer periods of time, and undermine law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute violent crimes with the assistance of immigrant victims.

Compounding the serious flaws in the legislation, Republicans forced the bill to the floor under a closed rule, allowing no opportunity for Democratic Members to offer amendments to improve the bill. Instead of following a truly democratic process to debate these important policy provisions, the majority finds it more important to shield their side from uncomfortable votes. This procedure is inappropriate for legislation as important as VAWA and is clearly inconsistent with the majority's pledge for a more open Congress.

VAWA always has been, and should have remained, a bipartisan bill. I am deeply troubled that my Republican colleagues decided to roll back protections for victims of abuse and failed to include the responsible reforms contained in the Senate bill that passed by a bipartisan vote of 68–31. We must pass a strong VAWA reauthorization, but this bill falls well short of that critical necessity.

I ask my colleagues to oppose this bill, and I encourage the Republican leadership to allow a vote on the bipartisan Senate bill.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I cannot support the H.R. 4970, the Republican bill that rolls back critical protections for domestic violence victims. Until now, reauthorization of the Violence against Women Act has involved a strong, bipartisan effort. In sharp contrast to this bipartisan history, the Republican Leadership aggressively is pushing a bill that weakens current law, shifts power into the hands of abusers, delays or denies protection to battered spouses and victims of heinous crimes such as rape and sexual assault, prevents law enforcement from gaining the cooperation of many immigrant victims of serious crimes, and leaves more dangerous criminals on the streets to strike again. This is unacceptable and undermines the intent of the bill to protect all victims of domestic and sexual violence.

In April 2012, the Senate passed by a vote of 68 to 31 a bipartisan bill that advanced the Federal government's commitment to protecting all victims—a bill that strengthens current law. In sharp contrast to the bipartisan Senate bill, the Republican bill fails to include key protections for Native American, immigrant, and LGBT victims of domestic violence. Even with the Manager's Amendment, the Republican bill undermines key protects for many domestic violence victims, making them less safe and tarnishing our American value of protecting the vulnerable. It is no wonder that over 100 organizations oppose the House Republican bill.

So, I stand with the diverse group of organizations—including the NAACP, the National Women's Law Center, the Human Rights Campaign, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors to strongly oppose the House Republican bill and to support the bipartisan Senate bill. As policymakers, we should be protecting our citizens, not decreasing their safety.

Ms. VELAZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation, which is an affront to women, their rights and their safety.

It is worth noting that the Violence Against Women Act was originally passed under a Republican Congress. Its provisions that protect immigrant women passed in 2000 and 2005—again during Republican majorities.

Yet, today, we are voting on legislation that would gut these protections, delivering women seeking help into the hands of their abusers—endangering their safety and their lives.

Immigrant women are disproportionately impacted by domestic violence. One study from New York City found that 51 percent of domestic partner homicide victims were foreign-

born. Other research has suggested that, among undocumented Latina women, the rate of battering is as high as 34%.

For immigrant women, there can be language barriers preventing them from seeking help. In many cases, abusers may try to use the threat of deportation to prevent their victims from leaving.

The Violence Against Women Act is designed to help those who are most vulnerable and who need assistance. Instead, the provisions being offered by the Majority, today, would make it harder for those who have been battered to escape abuse and find safety. This legislation weakens confidentiality protections that prevent abusers from knowing their victims are seeking help. Needless, duplicative interviews with DHS would make it harder for those who are abused to secure assistance through the immigration system. The legislation would also make it more difficult for those cooperating with law enforcement to avoid deportation. Collectively, these provisions effectively cut women off from help, making it harder for them to avail themselves of the legal process.

Make no mistake: despite what our Republican colleagues say, these provisions will not reduce immigration fraud. That argument is a red herring. Indeed, there is not one shred of evidence suggesting female immigrants are misusing the Violence Against Women Act.

How can we turn our back on women who need assistance? What kind of a message does it send to pass this legislation? Are we saying to those who suffer abuse they do not ''count'' because they are undocumented?

I say to my colleagues—let us send another message. Reject this legislation. Pass a real Violence Against Women Act that does not divide us by playing politics, but extends help to women who need it.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, it is with great disappointment that I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Alainst Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2012. I was proud to support the original Violence Against Women Act when Congress passed it with bipartisan support in 1994 because it created landmark programs to help victims of domestic violence, provided grants for law enforcement agencies, and established new categories of crimes such as stalking. VAWA is one of the true bipartisan success stories in Congress and it has achieved a real, significant and lasting impact on our nation. Since VAWA first passed, the annual incidence of domestic violence has decreased by 53 percent. However, there is still much work to be done, as approximately one in five women have been raped in their lifetime, and 45 percent of the women killed in the United States die after being attacked by an intimate partner.

Given the fact that violence against women continues to be a serious problem in this country, it is disappointing to see the Republican majority pursue such a partisan and reckless path forward with this legislation. Instead of following the Senate's lead, which passed an effective and bipartisan bill to reauthorize VAWA, the GOP has decided to play politics with this important issue and has significantly weakened protections for battered women and instituted discriminatory policies. Specifically, H.R. 4970 does not include key provisions of the Senate bill which ensure that LGBT victims are not discriminated against in VAWA programs. We can all agree that no victim of domestic abuse should be denied care because of their sexual orientation. As a lifetime supporter of civil rights I cannot in good conscience support legislation which would permit this to happen.

Further, three out of five Native American women are victims of domestic violence in their lifetime, which is a pressing national problem. The Senate bill addresses this concern by including provisions which would give Native American tribal governments jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute incidents of violence, in addition to providing grants to assist tribes in prosecuting such crimes. Yet H.R. 4970 does not adequately address these concerns by not including any of these provisions in the legislation. Such crass indifference makes this legislation impossible to support.

The path forward to reauthorize VAWA is clear. The Senate sent a clear message by passing a strong, bipartisan bill, and the House should do the same. Let us stop fighting these needless partisan battles and instead come together to reauthorize a program which has worked so well over the years. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting against H.R. 4970 and support the Senate bill.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, the Violence Against Women Act, VAWA, has historically provided a vast network of support for victims of dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking since its initial passage in 1994. Declining instances of domestic violence and increased awareness surrounding these forms of abuse are a testament to the success of VAWA's programs, and to the importance of its preservation. Unless VAWA is reauthorized, these programs will no longer be available to protect the countless victims of domestic violence and abuse throughout the United States.

Today, as Congress seeks to reauthorize this landmark piece of legislation for the third time, VAWA is at serious risk of being stripped of its most important provisions. The Senate version of VAWA was adopted on April 26 with bipartisan support, and not only preserves important protections for women but also expands those protections to LGBT individuals and Native American women. Conversely, H.R. 4970 represents a partisan bill that rolls back existing protections and excludes entire groups of victims.

As long as H.R. 4970 excludes critical improvements and disregards the recommendations of key stakeholders, I cannot support this bill. In the previous reauthorization, VAWA was drafted in a bipartisan fashion and included meaningful provisions for protecting battered and abused individuals, and as such I supported its passage. Unfortunately, H.R. 4970 completely fails to achieve the original objectives behind VAWA, and actually does more to harm women than it does to help them overcome their aggressors.

To show my support for VAWA, I have joined my colleagues as a cosponsor of H.R. 4271, an alternative to H.R. 4970 that contains language more consistent with the original intent of the bill. H.R. 4271 is simply a better bill that goes further to recognize the same prevalence of abuse among Native American women and LGBT individuals, and ensures that all victims are protected regardless of sexual orientation or national origin.

Madam Speaker, this attack on women needs to stop immediately. I can find no justification for why this Congress should exclude certain groups of women from the protections afforded by VAWA. The bill that is being considered before the House today does a disservice to victims of domestic abuse in the U.S., and falls drastically short of the original intent of the law.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012. The Violence Against Women Act, VAWA, has been instrumental in protecting women from domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Domestic violence often has devastating consequences for women, their families, and society as a whole.

VAWA provides essential grants including educational programs for the prevention of domestic violence in schools, battered women's shelters, a national domestic violence hotline, grants to improve law enforcement and prosecution of violent crimes against women, among others. It also provides much needed services for the protection of children from maltreatment, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

A manager's amendment was offered to address some immigrant protection issues with H.R. 4970, but did very little to change the original bill. H.R. 4970 would change the requirements for abused immigrant spouses of U.S. citizens and permanent residents by imposing a higher standard of proof than required for asylum applications, and by allowing government adjudicators to break confidentiality and interview an accused abuser. The revised bill would only prohibit basing decisions exclusively on the information provided by the abusive spouse. The bill would also decrease protections for immigrant victims by undermining the U visa program, which allows an immigrant victim of a serious crime to stay in the U.S. to assist law enforcement in investigating and prosecuting the crime. The manager's amendment only provides a small portion of victims the opportunity to adjust their legal status after their U visa expires. Battered immigrant spouses would be less likely to report abuse if they could still be deported and their abusive spouses would be made aware they are trying to seek help.

H.R. 4970 ignores improving the safety of co-ed students on college campuses. Provisions to strengthen requirements for universities to report on how they address sexual violence on campus, were removed from the bill. If college campuses are not protected from sexual harassment, assault, or violence; students will not be able to learn and could potentially miss out on true educational opportunities.

The bill would not restore Native American tribal courts' jurisdiction over crimes of domestic violence or dating violence committed on reservations and tribal lands in cases where the victim is a tribal member but the defendant is not. Those cases currently fall outside the jurisdiction of both tribal and state courts and are rarely prosecuted on the federal level.

I believe it is important to provide preventative domestic violence programs as well as help those who have been affected by domestic violence with programs that can help them recover and protect them in the future. Many of the domestic violence programs that we have today would not be able to continue without the reauthorization of VAWA. H.R. 4970

mitigates VAWA's 18-year history and abandons many victims of domestic and sexual violence.

As a supporter of VAWA from the beginning, I urge all my colleagues to oppose H.R. 4970 and to vote on a bill that would allow these much needed programs and services to continue so that we may work to stop domestic violence.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, this week, the House of Representatives is expected to take up a bill reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), a traditionally noncontroversial bill that improves the investigation and prosecution of violent crimes against women. The bill works: We've seen a 60 percent decrease in domestic violence since the bill first passed in 1994.

The Senate recently passed its version of this bill in an overwhelming, bipartisan vote. Unfortunately, the partisan House version rolls back some of its most critical components, limiting protections for certain classes of women. In fact, women's advocacy groups like the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence say this bill would discourage victims of these heinous crimes from going to the police for help and actually increase abusers' power.

I can't support this bill for a number of reasons, but chief among them are its failure to include provisions to help reduce violence against young women on college campuses. This issue, in particular, resonates as we mark the second anniversary of the tragic death of Yeardley Love, a Baltimore native and student athlete at the University of Virginia who was beaten by her abusive ex-boyfriend.

Yeardley's mother, Sharon Love, recently visited Washington to encourage lawmakers to swiftly pass the VAWA reauthorization approved by the Senate. That bill requires colleges to provide clear protocols and disciplinary policies for reports of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. It also requires colleges to help victims report the incident to law enforcement and seek a protective order if they choose to do so, as well as provide victims with options to change academic, living and transportation arrangements. Finally, it provides prevention programs for students who could be abusers, victims and bystanders.

It is shameful that the architects of the House bill have opted to remove these critical components. I am urging House leadership to bring the Senate version to a vote so we can provide real protection to women of all ages and races.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, House Republicans say they want to prevent violence against women, yet because of their ideological agenda, the bill on the floor this week actually eliminates current protections for battered women, placing them in danger.

Domestic violence does not respect any boundary; it does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation.

Turning Points, the only domestic violence intervention program in Prince William County, served 6,000 clients last year. In Fairfax County, there were more than 8,000 cases of domestic violence reported, and we have seen a 40 percent increase in homelessness due to domestic violence.

Yet House Republicans would make it harder for women to come forward to report abuse. In a letter to the Judiciary Committee, law enforcement officials from across the Nation said the Republican bill, quote, ''will turn back the clock on over 17 years' of progress made by law enforcement in reducing violence against women and children in our communities.''

Madam Speaker, protecting women and children from abusive situations should not be a partisan issue. We should take up the Senate's bipartisan bill and not further abuse these poor victims.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, It is with great pleasure to rise today in support of the Violence Against Women Act. In doing so, I am reminded of an old Samoan belief that the female siblings are the ''tama sa'' or sacred child in the family. They are to be treated with respect, care and love—offenders of this ancient taboo often faced extreme consequences. Madam Speaker, I am in full support of reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

While I fully support reauthorization of an Act of Congress that since 1994 has been an essential tool to protect victims of domestic and sexual violence, I do however have some major concerns with H.R. 4970, legislation before us today. Unlike the Senate reauthorization bill, S. 1925, introduced by Senators PATRICK LEAHY and MIKE CRAPO and was passed by the Senate last month with strong bipartisan support, H.R. 4970 introduced by my colleague Ms. SANDY ADAMS, will effectively bring more harm than protect victims of domestic violence.

Madam Speaker, unlike S. 1925, H.R. 4970 offers no protection for Indian spouses abused on tribal land. Under a 1978 Supreme Court decision, non-Indians cannot be prosecuted by tribal courts for crimes committed on tribal land. Last July, the Justice Department recommended that Congress give tribes local authority to prosecute non-Indians in misdemeanor domestic and dating violence cases.

Madam Speaker, the Senate reauthorization bill, S. 1925, will do just that. It will recognize certain tribes' concurrent jurisdiction to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence persons who assault Indian spouses, intimate partners, or dating partners, or who violate protection orders, in Indian country. It recognizes that tribal nations may be best able to address in their own communities—neither the United States nor any State would lose any criminal jurisdiction as a result.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 4970 on the other hand, completely ignores this ongoing injustice against Indian spouses, wives or partners, on tribal lands.

I am also disappointed that certain provisions in H.R. 4970 would strip away some of the existing protection for immigrant victims of abusive relationships. As it stands now, VAWA allows battered immigrants to petition for their own immigrant status, independent of their abusive spouses and thus freeing them from their spouse's abuse and control. If enacted however, H.R. 4970 will allow immigration officers to interview an alleged offender and consider the information obtained in making a determination about the adjudication of a battered immigrant's petition for status. This allows abusers to manipulate the immigration process to cause further harm on the victim. Moreover, it will reveal confidential information necessary to protect the victim and her children from the unwanted advances of an abusive spouse or partner.

Madam Speaker, in the ancient Samoan culture, it is a great shame to the male sibling if any harm or injury happens to the ''sacred child''. It is within this cultural context, and also with a deep sense of fairness and justice that I urge my colleagues to pass the Senate reauthorization bill. The house bill H.R. 4970, while it was written with good intention, does not do justice for the women of this country.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, the House Republican version of this bill rolls back existing protections for immigrants who are victims of domestic violence and strips provisions in the Senate version that protect Native Americans and LGBT abuse victims.

Republicans have decided to use this nonpartisan issue to push their war on women further than many of us thought possible. This new bill says that if a Native American or immigrant—documented or not—is the victim of abuse, the government should turn a blind eye. This is a cold, heartless vision of what law enforcement means to the American people, and it's hard to find words strong enough to reject it.

The House bill eliminates an existing confidentiality clause known as the self-petitioning process that allows abused women to apply confidentially, if appropriate, for protected immigration status. If the clause is removed from current law, women legally in the country because of a pending marriage who suffer abuse would not be able to keep their applications for permanent status private from their abusers. Boyfriends or husbands would be able to revoke the citizenship application, making the abused woman revert to undocumented status and limiting her legal options.

Men shouldn't be able to abuse women and control their access to law enforcement at the same time. This is a scary scenario that we shouldn't even have to contemplate.

Currently, Federal and State law enforcement officers have exclusive authority to prosecute misdemeanor domestic violence crimes committed by non-Indians on Tribal lands, many of which are known to go unprosecuted for logistical and other reasons. The Senate VAWA reauthorization bill lets Tribal law enforcement exercise jurisdiction over such cases, while the House version maintains the status quo. The unfortunate situation of abused Native women has been ignored for far too long. The law should protect all women from abuse, wherever they live. Republicans found an awful lot of nerve to deny equal protection to millions of Native American women for no reason I can tell.

The Senate version includes a provision that helps colleges and universities increase violence-prevention education and reduce dating abuse and sexual assault. The House version does not include that language. The Senate version prevents any entity that receives Federal anti-abuse grants from turning away LGBT victims when they have suffered from domestic violence or abuse. The House version is silent on the issue.

According to a National Network to End Domestic Violence report, ''Domestic violence impacts one in four American women over their lifetimes, and 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence each year. Victims rely on services to escape violence and rebuild their lives. When victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking take the difficult step to reach out for help, many are in life-threatening situations and must be able to find immediate refuge.''

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, offered by Representative ADAMS of Florida. I wish to extend my deep appreciation to Representative ADAMS for her leadership in introducing this legislation and my heart goes out to her and all of the women across the country who have been victims of domestic violence.

Each year, there are more than 200,000 victims of sexual assault nationwide. Sixty-two domestic violence deaths occurred in my home State of Indiana within a recent twelve-month period. As a husband to a wonderful wife and a father of two precious daughters, I strongly support efforts to end sexual violence and domestic abuse.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was originally passed by Congress in 1994 to address rising violent crime rates against women, and in subsequent years we have witnessed a dramatic reduction in the incidence of domestic violence in this country. In 2006, I supported legislation to reauthorize VAWA, which added improvements to enhance sentencing for repeat sex offenders and require pretrial detention of child pornographers.

While we have made progress in our fight against domestic and sexual violence, there is still work to be done, and that is why this reauthorization legislation is so important. Today's legislation continues our fight to prevent victims of these tragic crimes. It includes enhanced tools for law enforcement to arrest abusers and those who violate protection orders. It increases penalties for sexual assault and abuse. It funds programs to aid domestic violence victims seeking refuge from their abusers, and it promotes awareness in an effort to prevent these crimes from occurring in the first place.

I urge my colleagues to support this reauthorization of VAWA and to support our continued efforts to combat sexual violence and domestic abuse.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, House Republicans say they want to prevent violence against women, yet because of their ideological agenda, the bill on the floor this week actually eliminates current protections for battered women, placing them in danger.

Domestic violence does not respect any boundary; it does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation.

Turning Points, the only domestic violence intervention program in Prince William County, served 6,000 clients last year. In Fairfax County, there were more than 8,000 cases of domestic violence reported, and we have seen a 40 percent increase in homelessness due to domestic violence.

Yet House Republicans would make it harder for women to come forward to report abuse. In a letter to the Judiciary Committee, law enforcement officials from across the Nation said the Republican bill, quote, ''will turn back the clock on over 17 years' of progress made by law enforcement in reducing violence against women and children in our communities.''

Madam Speaker, protecting women and children from abusive situations should not be a partisan issue. We should take up the Senate's bipartisan bill and not further abuse these poor victims.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) should present Congress with an opportunity to set aside our many differences and work together so that women and families across the country can lead safer, healthier, and happier lives. VAWA has transformed our Nation's response to violence against women and brought critically needed resources to states and local communities so they can prosecute these crimes. Reauthorizing VAWA is essential. For these reasons, I am both saddened and angered that the Republican House majority has squandered this opportunity.

All women, no matter what their background or lifestyle, deserve to live free of violence and danger. Our Senate colleagues recognize this. They passed a thoughtful reauthorization bill that helps women in need.

The Senate bill prohibits discrimination against gay or transgender individuals in VAWA programs. It ensures that immigrant women can file domestic violence complaints without fear for their safety. It extends vital protections to Native American women by permitting non-Indian men who commit violent crimes against them on tribal land to be prosecuted through the tribal system. It also includes important improvements to better address the high rates of dating violence and sexual assault experienced by people in college and other educational settings.

In contrast, the House Republican VAWA bill leaves out all of these protections. It delivers the reprehensible message that women in the United States are not worthy of protection if they are gay, Indian, or non-citizens and it flat out fails to make other needed updates to the law.

Congress should not be in the business of choosing who is and is not deserving of safety. Every woman should have access to protective services if and when she needs it. The regressive policy in H.R. 4970 falls far short of this goal. I stand with President Obama and women's advocates across our country in opposing this bill and I urge all my colleagues to vote against it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 656, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

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

Ms. MOORE. Madam Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. MOORE. Yes, ma'am, I am opposed to the bill in its current form.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Moore moves to recommit the bill H.R. 4970 to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report the same to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Page 30, after line 3, insert the following:

SEC. 6. PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY OF VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to eliminate, reduce, or otherwise limit any protection in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act that provides confidentiality to victims of domestic violence to protect such victims from future violence. This protection includes preventing notification of a victim's efforts to seek assistance from law enforcement from being exposed or transmitted to the victim's suspected batterer.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Ms. MOORE. Madam Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will state her inquiry.

Ms. MOORE. Madam Speaker, if the final amendment that I'm offering here today were to be adopted, is it not the case that the bill will be amended and that the House will then proceed to final passage right away?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair stated on February 27, 2002, and May 10, 2012, if a motion to recommit with forthwith instructions is adopted, the amendment is reported by the chair of the committee and is immediately before the House.

The gentlewoman from Wisconsin is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MOORE. Madam Speaker, this motion to recommit simply clarifies that the preservation of confidentiality to protect the victims' identity to avoid retaliation and even loss of life shall not be weakened as compared to current law.

□ 1650

We have debated the need to expand this bill beyond what the author has put in. We have lost that debate because the Rules Committee has put forth a closed rule, and we do not have the opportunity to present the Senate version of the bill, which passed overwhelmingly in the Senate 68–31. So we have lost that battle for the Violence Against Women Act to include all women.

In this motion, we are simply trying to reestablish one little sliver—one little piece—in this bill that we are hoping the majority will recognize will greatly enhance the safety of all women. This motion simply protects the victim's identity to avoid retaliation and even the loss of life, and it makes sure it is not weakened as compared to current law. Now, we are going to be told that the manager's amendment does that, but it does not.

Under current law, abused women are able to seek help and come forward to authorities under the condition of confidentiality; but H.R. 4970, as amended, does a couple of things. For example, it delays the protection of battered victims by staying adjudications before pending investigations or prosecutions are completed. It creates a negative inference against the victim if law enforcement does not open a formal investigation or if prosecutors fail to prosecute the perpetrator. I can tell you that, notwithstanding the due process rights of abusers, current law provides a very delicate balance between the due process rights of abusers and the confidentiality of those accusers.

The fact that the bill was amended in this way restimulates me to remember

an incident in my own life when the balance of rights was tipped in favor of the abuser. I am reminded of a time when I got into an automobile, with a man whom I thought to be a personal friend, to go get some fried chicken. He pulled in behind some vacant buildings, and he raped me and choked me almost to death. When I went to the hospital, I was encouraged by an advocate—this was in the 1970s, long before there was a Violence Against Women Act, long before there was a Rape Shield Act—to take him to court.

Indeed, I was on trial because, like this bill—and just like what I experienced—I had to prove as a victim that I was not being fraudulent in my accusations. Oh, they brought up how I was an unwed mother with a baby. Maybe I seduced him. They talked about how I was dressed, and they carried me through all kinds of bureaucratic hoops. Ultimately, he was found to be not guilty; although, I had done everything that I was told to do in terms of prosecuting this. I cannot stress the solemn nature of this issue.

It doesn't surprise me that she had the cell phone in her hand but that she lost her life because she couldn't escape this man. It doesn't surprise me that she was shot four times behind the police station. The most dangerous time for a woman is when she is trying to escape her perpetrator, when she is trying to do something about it, when she is trying to turn her life around, hers and her children's.

When the perpetrator is given the tools that this bill gives him to have an abuser's rights prevail over the rights of the victim's, she will have the cell phone in her hand, but she will lose her life anyway because she cannot escape this man. The manager's amendment does not fix this. We have heard from 325 groups and organizations that oppose this bill and say that the manager's amendment does not fix it, so I urge my colleagues to support my amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. ADAMS. I oppose the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, Democrats in Congress and others have been accusing Republicans for months for waging a war on women. We've been called antivictim, elitist, homophobic, and racist. These ridiculous attacks stop now—right here, right now. It's a shame, really. We've always had a bipartisan vote on this issue. It has always been a bipartisan issue, but this year, it has turned into an election year politic.

The Violence Against Women Act was bipartisan legislation when it was enacted in 1994 and when it was reauthorized by a Republican-controlled House in 2000 and in 2006. Instead of coming together to reauthorize grant programs to help victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have created a phony war on women to score political points. These attacks are unfortunate and divisive. Domestic violence knows no political or socioeconomic boundaries. Neither should legislation to fund these important programs.

Critics of this bill outright dismiss the dozens of good, broadly bipartisan things that this bill does in its nearly 200 pages of text, and they have chosen to focus their attention on a handful of things it doesn't do. So let's be real about what the bill does:

It reauthorizes the VAWA grant programs for 5 years at the same levels as the Senate-passed bill. That's over $680 million a year in Federal funds to support these programs, and this is on top of the increase in funding for these programs that were adopted just last week by this House in the CJS appropriations bill.

It sets aside specific funding for sexual assault investigations, prosecutions, and victim services as well as reauthorizes State rape prevention education programs, programs to promote educational awareness to prevent violence and to improve services for young victims. The bill also improves emergency and transitional housing services for victims.

This bill provides greater protections to Indian women by designating domestic violence tribal liaisons within the U.S. Attorney's Offices, and it creates a new provision to allow victims of domestic violence or Indian tribes on behalf of victims to seek protection orders from U.S. district courts against Indian or non-Indian abusers.

When I made the decision to pack what few belongings I could carry and leave with my daughter to escape an abusive relationship, all I cared about was protecting my daughter and providing her a safe and healthy life. In my years of service in law enforcement, not once did a domestic assault or rape victim question where the help was coming from or which political party or organizations endorsed the law that made that funding possible.

The reason for that is this: This bill isn't about Washington politics. It's about people's lives.

If you vote against this bill today, you will vote to deny help to millions of victims. Opponents are willing to sacrifice helping millions of American women escape their abusers in the name of political gamesmanship, so I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the motion to recommit and ''yes'' on the final passage.

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.

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

Ms. MOORE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of H.R. 4970, if ordered, and suspension of the rules with regard to H.R. 2621, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 187, nays 236, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 257]

YEAS—187

Ackerman	Fattah	Nadler
Altmire	Frank (MA)	Napolitano
Andrews	Fudge	Neal
Baca	Garamendi	Olver
Baldwin	Gonzalez	Owens
Barrow	Green, Al	Pallone
Bass (CA)	Green, Gene	Pascrell
Becerra	Grijalva	Pastor (AZ)
Berkley	Gutierrez	Pelosi
Berman	Hahn	Perlmutter
Bishop (GA)	Hanabusa	Peters
Bishop (NY)	Hastings (FL)	Peterson
Blumenauer	Heinrich	Pingree (ME)
Bonamici	Higgins	Polis
Boren	Himes	Price (NC)
Boswell	Hinchey	Quigley
Brady (PA)	Hirono	Rahall
Braley (IA)	Hochul	Rangel
Brown (FL)	Holden	Reyes
Burton (IN)	Holt	Richardson
Butterfield	Honda	Richmond
Capps	Hoyer	Ross (AR)
Capuano	Israel	Rothman (NJ)
Cardoza	Jackson (IL)	Roybal-Allard
Carnahan	Jackson Lee (TX)	Ruppersberger
Carney	Johnson, E. B.	Rush
Carson (IN)	Jones	Ryan (OH)
Castor (FL)	Kaptur	Sanchez, Loretta
Chandler	Keating	Sarbanes
Chu	Kildee	Schakowsky
Cicilline	Kind	Schiff
Clarke (MI)	Kissell	Schrader
Clarke (NY)	Kucinich	Schwartz
Clay	Langevin	Scott (VA)
Cleaver	Larsen (WA)	Scott, David
Clyburn	Larson (CT)	Serrano
Cohen	Lee (CA)	Sewell
Connolly (VA)	Levin	Sherman
Conyers	Lewis (GA)	Shuler
Cooper	Lipinski	Sires
Costa	Loebsack	Smith (WA)
Costello	Lofgren, Zoe	Speier
Courtney	Lowey	Stark
Critz	Luján	Sutton
Crowley	Lynch	Thompson (CA)
Cuellar	Maloney	Thompson (MS)
Cummings	Markey	Tierney
Davis (CA)	Matheson	Tonko
Davis (IL)	Matsui	Towns
DeFazio	McCarthy (NY)	Tsongas
DeGette	McCollum	Van Hollen
DeLauro	McDermott	Velázquez
Deutch	McGovern	Visclosky
Dicks	McIntyre	Walz (MN)
Dingell	McNerney	Wasserman Schultz
Doggett	Meeks	Waters
Donnelly (IN)	Michaud	Watt
Doyle	Miller (NC)	Waxman
Edwards	Miller, George	Welch
Ellison	Moore	Wilson (FL)
Engel	Moran	Woolsey
Eshoo	Murphy (CT)	Yarmuth
Farr		

NAYS—236

Adams	Bilirakis	Canseco
Aderholt	Bishop (UT)	Cantor
Akin	Black	Capito
Alexander	Blackburn	Carter
Amash	Bonner	Chabot
Amodei	Bono Mack	Chaffetz
Austria	Boustany	Coble
Bachmann	Brady (TX)	Coffman (CO)
Bachus	Brooks	Cole
Barletta	Broun (GA)	Conaway
Bartlett	Buchanan	Cravaack
Barton (TX)	Bucshon	Crawford
Bass (NH)	Buerkle	Crenshaw
Benishek	Burgess	Culberson
Berg	Calvert	Davis (KY)
Biggert	Camp	Denham
Bilbray	Campbell	Dent

DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Dreier
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emerson
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Flake
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guinta
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Heck
Hensarling
Herger
Herrera Beutler
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Kelly
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCotter
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meehan
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Myrick
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paul
Paulsen
Pearce
Pence
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Quayle
Reed
Rehberg
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Rivera
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross (FL)
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Scalise
Schilling
Schmidt
Schock
Schweikert
Scott (SC)
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stearns
Stivers
Stutzman
Sullivan
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner (NY)
Turner (OH)
Upton
Walberg
Walden
Walsh (IL)
Webster
West
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—8

Cassidy
Filner
Hinojosa
Johnson (GA)
Labrador
Landry
Sánchez, Linda T.
Slaughter

□ 1720

Messrs. RUNYAN and FINCHER, Mrs. HARTZLER, Messrs. GRAVES of Missouri, MARCHANT, BROOKS and MEEHAN changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. BERMAN, Ms. PINGREE, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. SPEIER and Ms. BROWN of Florida changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 257, had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall 257, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

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. CONYERS. Madam 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 222, noes 205, not voting 4, as follows:

[Roll No. 258]

AYES—222

Adams
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Amodei
Austria
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barrow
Barton (TX)
Benishek
Berkley
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boren
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brooks
Buchanan
Bucshon
Buerkle
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canseco
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cole
Conaway
Cravaack
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Dreier
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emerson
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Flake
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gardner
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guinta
Guthrie
Hall
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Heck
Hensarling
Herger
Herrera Beutler
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Lamborn
Lance
Landry
Lankford
Latham
Latta
Lewis (CA)
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marino
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McCotter
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Myrick
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Pence
Peterson
Petri
Pitts
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Quayle
Reed
Rehberg
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rokita
Rooney
Roskam
Ross (FL)
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Scalise
Schilling
Schmidt
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Schweikert
Scott (SC)
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stearns
Stivers
Stutzman
Sullivan
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner (NY)
Turner (OH)
Upton
Walberg
Walden
Walsh (IL)
Webster
West
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOES—205

Ackerman
Altmire
Amash
Andrews
Baca
Baldwin
Bartlett
Bass (CA)
Bass (NH)
Becerra
Berg
Berman
Biggert
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boswell
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Castor (FL)
Chandler
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke (MI)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Critz
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Farr
Fattah
Frank (MA)
Fudge
Garamendi
Garrett
Gonzalez
Gosar
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hanna
Hastings (FL)
Heinrich
Higgins
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hochul
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kildee
Kind
Kissell
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Luján
Lynch
Maloney
Markey
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meehan
Meeks
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (CT)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Olver
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paul
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree (ME)
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Richmond
Rivera
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross (AR)
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stark
Sutton
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Wolf
Woolsey
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—4

Cassidy
Filner
Labrador
Slaughter

□ 1729

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 against:

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall 258, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

CHIMNEY ROCK NATIONAL MONUMENT ESTABLISHMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 2621) to establish the Chimney Rock National Monument in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

BLOCKING PROPERTY OF PERSONS THREATENING THE PEACE, SECURITY, OR STABILITY OF YEMEN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 112–109)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the ''order'') declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Yemen and others to threaten Yemen's peace, security, and stability.

The order does not target the entire country of Yemen or its government, but rather targets those who threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen, including by obstructing the implementation of the agreement of November 23, 2011, between the Government of Yemen and those in opposition to it, which provides for a peaceful transition of power that meets the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people for change, or by obstructing the political process in Yemen. The order provides criteria for the blocking of property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to: have engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen, such as acts that obstruct the implementation of the agreement of November 23, 2011, between the Government of Yemen and those in opposition to it, which provides for a peaceful transition of power in Yemen, or that obstruct the political process in Yemen; be a political or military leader of an entity that has engaged in the acts described above; have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the acts described above or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

The designation criteria will be applied in accordance with applicable Federal law including, where appropriate, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *May 16, 2012*.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM EXTENSION ACT

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5740) to extend the National Flood Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5740

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 ''National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act''.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1319 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4026) is amended by striking ''the earlier of the date of the enactment into law of an Act that specifically amends the date specified in this section or May 31, 2012'' and inserting ''June 30, 2012''.

(b) FINANCING.—Section 1309(a) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4016(a)) is amended by striking ''the earlier of the date of the enactment into law of an Act that specifically amends the date specified in this section or May 31, 2012'' and inserting ''June 30, 2012''.

SEC. 3. USE OF PRIVATE INSURANCE TO SATISFY MANDATORY PURCHASE REQUIREMENT.

Section 102(b) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''lending institutions not to make'' and inserting ''lending institutions—

''(A) not to make'';

(B) in subparagraph (A), as designated by subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, by striking ''less.'' and inserting ''less; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(B) to accept private flood insurance as satisfaction of the flood insurance coverage requirement under subparagraph (A) if the coverage provided by such private flood insurance meets the requirements for coverage under such subparagraph.'';

(2) in paragraph (2), by inserting after ''provided in paragraph (1).'' the following new sentence: ''Each Federal agency lender shall accept private flood insurance as satisfaction of the flood insurance coverage requirement under the preceding sentence if the flood insurance coverage provided by such private flood insurance meets the requirements for coverage under such sentence.'';

(3) in paragraph (3), in the matter following subparagraph (B), by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''The Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation shall accept private flood insurance as satisfaction of the flood insurance coverage requirement under the preceding sentence if the flood insurance coverage provided by such private flood insurance meets the requirements for coverage under such sentence.''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'private flood insurance' means a contract for flood insurance coverage allowed for sale under the laws of any State.''.

SEC. 4. PRIVATIZATION INITIATIVES.

(a) FEMA AND GAO REPORTS.—Not later than the expiration of the 18-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Comptroller General of the United States shall each conduct a separate study to assess a broad range of options, methods, and strategies for privatizing the national flood insurance program and shall each submit a report to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate with recommendations for the best manner to accomplish such privatization.

(b) PRIVATE RISK-MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES.—

(1) AUTHORITY.—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency may carry out such private risk-management initiatives under the national flood insurance program as the Administrator considers appropriate to determine the capacity of private insurers, reinsurers, and financial markets to assist communities, on a voluntary basis only, in managing the full range of financial risks associated with flooding.

(2) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than the expiration of the 12-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall assess the capacity of the private reinsurance, capital, and financial markets by seeking proposals to assume a portion of the program's insurance risk and submit to the Congress a report describing the response to such request for proposals and the results of such assessment.

(3) PROTOCOL FOR RELEASE OF DATA.—The Administrator shall develop a protocol to provide for the release of data sufficient to

conduct the assessment required under paragraph (2).

(c) REINSURANCE.—The National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 is amended—

(1) in section 1331(a)(2) (42 U.S.C. 4051(a)(2)), by inserting '', including as reinsurance of insurance coverage provided by the flood insurance program'' before '', on such terms'';

(2) in section 1332(c)(2) (42 U.S.C. 4052(c)(2)), by inserting ''or reinsurance'' after ''flood insurance coverage'';

(3) in section 1335(a) (42 U.S.C. 4055(a))—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' after ''(a)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) The Director is authorized to secure reinsurance coverage of coverage provided by the flood insurance program from private market insurance, reinsurance, and capital market sources at rates and on terms determined by the Director to be reasonable and appropriate in an amount sufficient to maintain the ability of the program to pay claims and that minimizes the likelihood that the program will utilize the borrowing authority provided under section 1309.'';

(4) in section 1346(a) (12 U.S.C. 4082(a))—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting '', or for purposes of securing reinsurance of insurance coverage provided by the program,'' before ''of any or all of'';

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''estimating'' and inserting ''Estimating''; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking ''receiving'' and inserting ''Receiving''; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(D) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking ''making'' and inserting ''Making''; and

(ii) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period;

(E) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by striking ''otherwise'' and inserting ''Otherwise''; and

(ii) by redesignating such paragraph as paragraph (5); and

(F) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph:

''(4) Placing reinsurance coverage on insurance provided by such program.''; and

(5) in section 1370(a)(3) (42 U.S.C. 4121(a)(3)), by inserting before the semicolon at the end the following: '', is subject to the reporting requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, pursuant to section 13(a) or 15(d) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 78m(a), 78o(d)), or is authorized by the Director to assume reinsurance on risks insured by the flood insurance program''.

(d) ASSESSMENT OF CLAIMS-PAYING ABILITY.—

(1) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than September 30 of each year, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall conduct an assessment of the claims-paying ability of the national flood insurance program, including the program's utilization of private sector reinsurance and reinsurance equivalents, with and without reliance on borrowing authority under section 1309 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4016). In conducting the assessment, the Administrator shall take into consideration regional concentrations of coverage written by the program, peak flood zones, and relevant mitigation measures.

(2) REPORT.—The Administrator shall submit a report to the Congress of the results of each such assessment, and make such report available to the public, not later than 30 days after completion of the assessment.

SEC. 5. STUDIES OF VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD INSURANCE OPTIONS.

(a) STUDIES.—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Comptroller General of the United States shall each conduct a separate study to assess options, methods, and strategies for offering voluntary community-based flood insurance policy options and incorporating such options into the national flood insurance program. Such studies shall take into consideration and analyze how the policy options would affect communities having varying economic bases, geographic locations, flood hazard characteristics or classifications, and flood management approaches.

(b) REPORTS.—Not later than the expiration of the 18-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Comptroller General of the United States shall each submit a report to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate on the results and conclusions of the study such agency conducted under subsection (a), and each such report shall include recommendations for the best manner to incorporate voluntary community-based flood insurance options into the national flood insurance program and for a strategy to implement such options that would encourage communities to undertake flood mitigation activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

□ 1740

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today to ask my colleagues for their support of H.R. 5740, the National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act.

The program is set to expire on May 31, and this critical legislation will spare property owners and the housing market from another lapse in the NFIP. It extends the National Flood Insurance Program's authorization for 30 days, until June 30. In addition, it would initiate several noncontroversial reforms to develop private sector options in the flood insurance market.

Like many of my colleagues—especially my good friend and cosponsor of both this bill and our long-term reauthorization, the gentlelady from California, MAXINE WATERS—I am frustrated that the House must consider yet another short-term extension. It has been 10 months since the House sent H.R. 1309, a comprehensive, bipartisan reform and a 5-year reauthorization measure, to the Senate.

Our Committee on Financial Services approved H.R. 1309 by a unanimous vote of 54–0 in the committee, and it passed on the House floor by a vote of 406–22. As part of that process, we secured the input and support of groups representing the views of everyone from taxpayers to businesses to wildlife defenders. And yet, after five additional short-term extensions, the Senate has still not considered any legislation to reform the NFIP. Instead, all we hear are excuses and rumors—that the administration doesn't want Congress to look productive, that floor time in the Senate is too precious, or that Senate leaders simply don't want to deal with possibly difficult amendments.

The time for excuses has run out. This program is more than $17 billion in debt to the taxpayers. We owe it to the homeowners, to the housing market, and to taxpayers to begin the process of fixing this program, even if we must do it 30 days at a time.

Today, we are sending to the Senate H.R. 5740. Should the Senate pass this short-term extension bill, it will have around 6 weeks from today to take up a flood reform measure and send it to the House. In the meantime, this 30-day extension will initiate key elements of our bipartisan House-passed reforms. It opens the door to private sector participation by asking FEMA and the GAO to study the cost and feasibility of private reinsurance, as well as the private market's capacity to provide new options for homeowners. It also says that private insurance coverage can take the place of government coverage to meet the requirements of lenders in flood-prone areas. The sooner we begin making these changes, the sooner taxpayers can stop bearing the full expense and risk of an outdated flood program.

Over the next 6 weeks, the Senate will have more than enough time to pass long-term reform. Again, last July, the House passed H.R. 1309 by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, 406–22. The House then sent this text to the Senate two additional times. In December, the House passed flood reform as part of H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act, and last week the House passed the same flood measure as part of H.R. 5652, the Reconciliation Act.

But this isn't like other partisan battles. It should not be that difficult. Even the White House is with us. In September 2011, President Obama released a statement in support of our reforms as part of his ''Plan for Economic Growth and Debt Reduction'' because the House bill would spare taxpayers from billions in losses.

Senate Banking Committee Chairman JOHNSON has secured committee approval of his own version, S. 1940, along with strong bipartisan support. And in February, 41 Senators—Republicans and Democrats—sent a letter to Senate leadership asking that Senate leaders REID and MCCONNELL schedule

flood insurance reform for floor consideration.

There is simply no reason that in the next few days we cannot sit down and reconcile any differences that remain between the House and Senate visions for flood reform, and today's legislation will give the Senate time to make that a possibility. It will also begin the process of fixing the NFIP and protecting taxpayers from unnecessary risk.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill because this program is too important to let lapse and too in debt to continue without reform.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The National Flood Insurance Program plays a very, very key role in our Nation's efforts to prevent and recover from flood disasters. Floods are now the number one natural disaster in the United States in terms of lives lost and property damaged.

Now, here is exactly what the National Flood Insurance Program does:

First, it identifies areas of flood risk; secondly, it encourages communities to implement measures to mitigate against the risk of flood loss; thirdly, it provides financial assistance to help individuals recover more rapidly from flooding disasters, and it lessens the financial impact of flood disasters on individuals, on businesses, and all levels of government.

In recent years, a series of short-term reauthorizations and temporary suspensions of the NFIP have eroded confidence in the program among our stakeholders—including State government, tribal governments, local communities, individual policyholders, mortgage lenders, and the private insurance industry. In addition to disrupting the program's day-to-day operations, short-term reauthorizations and temporary suspensions—like what we're doing here in 30 days—creates significant uncertainty regarding the Federal Government's long-term commitment to underwriting and indemnifying flood losses. So in the absence of such a commitment, our stakeholders are less likely to make the necessary investments that are needed to successfully sustain, strengthen, and grow the program, thereby undermining the program's effectiveness and efficiency over time.

As my colleague, Mrs. BIGGERT, mentioned earlier, Congress last passed a bill to extend the National Flood Insurance Program authorization on December 23, 2011—5 months ago—as a part of the full-year omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal year 2012. Even prior to this action, we in the House took decisive action to extend the flood insurance program the way it should be by approving a 5-year flood insurance reform reauthorization bill last July that passed this House on a strongly bipartisan Republican and Democratic vote of 406–22.

Unfortunately, the National Flood Insurance Program is set now to expire May 31, just over 2 weeks from today, and guess what? June 1 also happens to mark the official start of the hurricane season in this country. This lets you know how we have got to put pressure on the Senate to act responsibly. Here we are attempting to pass a 30-day extension just 2 weeks before the devastating hurricane season starts. Urgency is necessary here. This is why reauthorizing of the National Flood Insurance Program before it expires is essential to our Nation's efforts to prevent and recover from flood disasters.

So I'm pleased that the bill that we have before us does extend the program for 30 days, but it is not a perfect bill, as I said. I believe that many in this Chamber—just about everybody in the House of Representatives—would prefer to see the Senate take up and pass our bill for the 5-year extension, H.R. 1309. Short of that, I believe that many on our side would prefer to take up a flood extension bill that will provide a clean extension.

In addition, there is the possibility—count it, with 2 weeks to go, who knows—the Senate simply may not agree to an extension that only runs 30 days and includes authorization provisions. We just learned last evening that the junior Senator from Oklahoma, Senator TOM COBURN, objected to the majority leader's request to take up and approve a clean, short-term extension bill that would extend the program until December 31, 2012. So here we are, 2 weeks before the hurricane season starts, and the flood program runs out, and still no action from the Senate.

□ 1750

I think it is also important to note that while this body repeatedly has voiced concern with spending, particularly with spending that is not offset with cuts, the Congressional Budget Office has indicated this bill will cost $2 million over 5 years, an amount that is not offset in this bill.

Despite some of these shortcomings, I believe it is of utmost importance that we avoid any lapse in the program. Any lapse, regardless of the duration, would cause significant dislocation in our very fragile housing market for borrowers unable to complete mortgage closings, for insurance agents that sell national flood insurance policies as a part of their business, and for insurance companies that may be forced to reevaluate their voluntary participation, our National Flood Insurance Program's own Write Your Own program. All are very vital.

Finally, we have a broad coalition of stakeholders who support the bill, who support the 5-year extension, including industry insurance trade groups, floodplain managers, the Realtors who are holding their annual conference in Washington, D.C., this week, many other groups. In addition, FEMA's Administrator, Mr. Craig Fugate, recently sent a letter to Congress urging approval of the extension. So here we are, we've got to pass this 30-day extension.

In conclusion, I just want to add that, thanks to Mrs. BIGGERT and to Ms. WATERS, we were able to do something that was vitally needed. As many of you know, my State of Georgia was devastated with floods; and one of the things that did come out of this is, during the hardship times, very difficult for individuals to pay for the flood insurance in a lump sum. As we have made part of our extension effort, they can now pay in quarterly installments, and that's a great thing.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), the chairman of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. BACHUS. I thank the gentlelady.

We're here on the floor discussing this bill for one reason and for one reason only, and that's that the Senate has not done their job.

Ten months ago, Madam Speaker, this House passed a bipartisan, long-term reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program. Our bill passed unanimously out of committee and then passed the House, overwhelmingly, with over 400 votes, Democrats and Republicans joining together.

Our bill not only included a 5-year reauthorization of the program, a long-term reauthorization, which is what's needed, but included many needed reforms that reduce the burden on taxpayers, increase private market participation, and help bring certainty to the housing market.

We did our job, Madam Speaker, but the Senate's failed to do their job. Seventeen temporary extensions. Perhaps none of us should be surprised. After all, it's been 3 years since the Senate even bothered to pass a budget. Not to mention, at a time when millions of Americans are out of work, the Senate has failed to vote on 27 job-creating bills we passed out of the House, overwhelmingly.

Now Majority Leader HARRY REID has failed to find time to schedule floor time, even though the Senate, under the leadership of Chairman JOHNSON and Ranking Member SHELBY, unanimously passed a bill almost identical to the bill we passed 10 months ago.

But because of a dysfunctional Senate that's not working, we're once again faced with the risk of having the flood insurance shut down, as the gentleman from Georgia said, right before hurricane season starts. I can't think of a worse time. A shutdown of flood insurance, even a temporary one, would do tremendous damage to our struggling economy and our Nation's fragile housing market.

Specifically, what does it mean? I'd like to introduce a letter from the National Association of Realtors. It is already delaying close to 1,300 house closings every day. If it expires, it will

stop all development dead in its tracks in 21,000 communities across America.

Let me close by saying I want to commend our colleague, Mrs. BIGGERT. Congresswoman BIGGERT has done an exceptional job on this important issue. I'd like to commend Congresswoman and Ranking Member MAXINE WATERS. They've worked, over the last year, for a long-term reauthorization. We've come together and done our job.

I would like to commend the Senate, but, unfortunately, the Senate is not working. It's time for the Senate to pass a 5-year bill, and it's time for them to pass it immediately. That's why, although we have passed a 5-year reauthorization, we're here. But we're only passing a 1-month extension because the best they can do is another extension—number 17—which would put it into December, when we all know that's a lame duck Congress and we're going to be confronted with tremendous other issues at that time.

To the Senate I say: Let's get going.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS,®
Washington, DC, May 16, 2012.

Hon. SPENCER BACHUS,
Chairman, House Committee on Financial Services, House of Representatives, Rayburn Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BACHUS: The 1 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® supports a temporary extension of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) authority to enable the Senate to finish work on its long-term reauthorization and reform measure (S. 1940). The House is scheduled to vote on H.R. 5740 to extend authority by 30 days to June 30, 2012. We urge a yes vote.

NFIP authority is set to expire on May 31, 2012. Consequently, property buyers in more than 21,000 communities across the United States will no longer be able to obtain the flood insurance required by law for the purchase of a home or building. Each day that program authority lapses, more than 1,300 home sales will be delayed or cancelled. Allowing another lapse only exacerbates the many serious economic challenges facing a nation that relies on a vibrant real estate market for its economy.

Homebuyers, small business owners and local communities urge the House to vote yes on H.R. 5740 to keep the NFIP from lapsing. Your vote to extend authority will avoid further market disruption while Congress works toward long-term reauthorization and reform.

Sincerely,
MAURICE ''MOE'' VEISSI,
2012 President, National Association of REALTORS®.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. I'd like to thank Representative SCOTT for his leadership on this issue. I'd like to thank Chairman BACHUS for his support for all of the work that has gone into flood insurance reform.

I rise today in support of H.R. 5740, the National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act of 2012. But more than anybody, I'd like to thank Representative BIGGERT for her hard work on this bill and flood insurance reform, and I'm pleased to cosponsor this legislation.

While this bill, by no means, is a substitute for the comprehensive set of reforms included in H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act, a bipartisan bill which passed the House last year, I believe that we must act to pass this bill so that the flood insurance program does not lapse.

The flood insurance program provides valuable protection for approximately 5.5 million homeowners. Unfortunately, the lack of a long-term authorization has placed the program at risk. The program lapsed three times in 2010. These lapses meant FEMA was not able to write new policies, renew expiring policies, or increase coverage limits. Given the current crisis in the housing market, this instability in the flood insurance program is hampering that market's recovery and must be addressed.

The current authorization for the flood insurance program expires on May 31. The next day, hurricane season begins. It is irresponsible to have our Nation's homeowners vulnerable to flooding at any time, but to allow such a lapse during hurricane season is especially troubling.

Even though this bill only extends the program for 30 days, I hope that this brief window will give our counterparts in the Senate enough time to pass their flood insurance reform bill so that this program has all of the resources it needs to fully serve homeowners and the communities in which they live.

I strongly urge an ''aye'' vote on this bill in the hope that the next flood insurance bill we vote on is a comprehensive reauthorization bill.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the gentlelady yielding time to me, especially because I am opposed to this bill. I would just have one question for my colleagues, and I would ask this: What in the world is the Federal Government doing in the national flood insurance business?

And I would give the sponsors certainly of this legislation credit for the fact that they're trying to reform what I think is an unnecessary Federal Government boondoggle. But rather than reforming this, I think we need to eliminate this program.

Let me just give you an example, Mr. Speaker.

So many of us were very strongly opposed to ObamaCare, the government takeover of health care, because we didn't believe the Federal Government should be running the health care for our entire Nation. But apparently we have no problem with the Federal Government running a National Flood Insurance Program.

This program was created in 1968. We started writing policies in 1972, and today this program is almost $18 billion in debt. And FEMA says that this debt will never be paid for, never, never be paid off. So not only is the Federal Government improperly running a flood insurance program, it's operating a very bad flood insurance program.

This program is not actuarially sound. It charges some of the highest risk areas subsidized rates and charges other areas of no risk astronomical rates to pay for those subsidies.

□ 1800

You can use my home State of Michigan as a great example where our residents have been forced into this program and have been charged thousands of dollars every year even though we have almost no risk of flooding. In Michigan, we actually look down at the water, not up at the water. We've paid multiple times more in premiums than we've ever received back in benefits. In short, Mr. Speaker, the people of the great State of Michigan are getting fleeced by this program.

Obviously, we are a compassionate Nation. When we have a case of a natural disaster, or what have you, we need to make sure that we step up and give relief to our fellow Americans, but what we are doing here today is simply not fair. What we should have is a national catastrophic fund so that everybody pays, not just some who are being forced to subsidize others. That is not fair.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that my colleagues would join me in rejecting the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program so that we can get to work on a way to allow the private marketplace to move in and to replace it.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA).

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Congressman SCOTT.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the National Flood Insurance Program, and I urge support on both sides of the aisle for the 30-day extension today, H.R. 5740.

I would like to thank my friend, Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS from California, and my esteemed colleague, Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT of Illinois, for their work on this bill and on H.R. 1309, which I proudly cosponsored. Ideally, we should be increasing certainty for homeowners by reauthorizing the program for 5 years, as effected by H.R. 1309, which passed the House last July with over 400 votes. Now it waits for Senate action. I respectfully urge our counterparts in the Senate to pass a longer-term authorization.

Since 2008, the National Flood Insurance Program has operated on several short-term extensions, which only increase uncertainty in the housing market. As hurricane season approaches, Congress needs to act with all diligence to provide stability for the housing market and to give peace of mind to homeowners.

Mrs. BIGGERT. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD), a member of the committee.

Mr. DOLD. I certainly want to thank my good friend from Illinois for her leadership and for her giving me some time, and I want to thank the ranking member, Ms. WATERS, for her leadership as well.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 5740. The history of American flood disasters has clearly shown us two things:

First, an effective and proactive National Flood Insurance Program with paid-in premiums is a much better deal for taxpayers than after-the-fact Federal disaster assistance, which was the inevitable Federal response to flood disasters before this program's inception;

Second, any lapse in the program's authorization irreparably damages our mortgage and real estate markets, and avoiding that irreparable damage is particularly important right now when those markets are already so seriously challenged.

Although reauthorization is essential, we also recognize that the program needs meaningful reforms. We must gradually diminish taxpayer exposure to flood losses while improving the program's solvency and self-sufficiency; and we must work with the private sector to expand its role in protecting against flood disasters.

Under Chairwoman BIGGERT's leadership, a long-term reauthorization bill with these necessary reforms, H.R. 1309, passed out of the Financial Services Committee unanimously, 54–0, and then the same bill received nearly unanimous bipartisan support right down here where over 400 Members voted in its favor. With that kind of overwhelming bipartisan support, I must say that it's a little frustrating that we're here once again discussing a short-term reauthorization, largely because the other body hasn't considered the long-term bill, even though the long-term bill passed out of the Senate Banking Committee by voice vote.

One thing that seems clear is that the strategy of short-term authorizations, the corresponding temporary program lapses and uncertainty do not work to minimize taxpayer risk or to expand the private sector's role, but we must deal with the existing realities. To properly reform and strengthen this program, we need to reauthorize this program on a long-term basis, and we need to do so promptly; but the Senate hasn't acted, and we can't tolerate any lapse in the program.

So I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5740, which will avoid a destructive program lapse while we continue to work towards a long-term authorization.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. I yield myself such time as I may consume to respond very briefly.

There is a great urgency here. There is a very serious cry coming from the American people. That cry is saying, Help us, and the kind of help we need is to prepare for the storm before the hurricane is raging.

We live in storm alley. Now, I can tell you from firsthand experience that I represent a district in the State of Georgia where in 2010, I believe it was, we had the worst flood in over 500 years. I represent the Chattahoochee River, which overflowed. I represent one county in which we had 10 people who lost their lives, and seven of those people were from one county in my district, in Douglas County. Cobb County had losses. We got on, I guess we call it, Air Force Two with Vice President BIDEN, and we flew down with FEMA and Homeland Security, and we toured that place. I'm sure you all saw on CNN and Fox and MSNBC—and on all the news stations—where Six Flags Over Georgia, the amusement park, was totally under water.

So I can speak for my community and my area as those of us in the House have spoken—over 400 strong. Why in the world the United States Senate is sitting on the reauthorization is a mystery amidst the cry coming from the American people. Now our season is on us. Hurricane season starts in 2 weeks.

Let me just tell you that I've heard from one of the individuals on the other side, and I wanted to respond to some of those concerns as to why this bill is so important.

Our reauthorization bill would require annual notifications to homeowners who are living in flood zones about the risks in their communities. Many people move into these areas, and they don't even know they're in flood zones. What we've got in this bill is that they will be notified every year. They need that information so they can make the adjustments. I mentioned the affordable insurance coverage. I need not mention the flood maps, themselves, many of which all throughout this country are outdated, that leave many of your constituents and my constituents—I hope the Senate is hearing because they're their constituents as well—at risk for flood damage without even their knowledge.

Let's hope that this message gets across to the Senate that we need action. The American people are crying for help, and we need to give it to them immediately. We've got 2 weeks to do it, and we dare not let this hurricane season come upon us with the National Flood Insurance Program's having expired.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY), a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. DUFFY. I first want to recognize the gentlelady from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentlelady from California (Ms. WATERS) for their great and hard work on the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program.

While I rise today in support of this short-term extension, I have to be frank and honest and tell you that I am disappointed that we haven't found both Chambers coming together to reauthorize this program for 5 years. What this does is to create uncertainty in the market. For the individual who may have a home in a floodplain or for a community that has many of its pieces of property in a floodplain, without having a long-term bill, it creates uncertainty for them.

□ 1810

It creates uncertainty in the housing market, which has obviously gone through some very strenuous times since the 2008 financial crisis. This legislation, a long-term fix, would help breed certainty in that market as well.

As we look back at last summer, we passed this legislation with both sides of the aisle coming together. It doesn't happen very often. It was one of those great moments in the House where it was a vote of 406–22. Both Republicans and Democrats joined hands in passing this legislation. Now we're just waiting for the Senate to act. It's a bill that's going to save $4.2 billion over the course of 10 years. It includes reforms that are going to save taxpayers money by eliminating unnecessary rate subsidies and encouraging the development of a private flood insurance market.

I support the short-term extension, but I also encourage the Senate to act.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time. I would inquire if the lady from Illinois has any more speakers.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I think we have just one more speaker.

At this time, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO).

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, once again we find that good legislation that was passed by the House has been taken hostage by the Senate.

As we approach yet another deadline on the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program, the Senate is refusing to take up our long-term solution.

Ten months ago, we passed a 5-year bill that would bring much needed certainty and stability to the people depending on this program. The short-term package before us today fails to provide a long-term solution to a very real long-term problem.

NFIP provides flood insurance to more than 20,000 communities across this Nation, including more than 50,000 families in my district. Many of my constituents in Mississippi are still dealing with the effects of Hurricane Katrina. They have experienced record flooding in recent years, and we are fast approaching another hurricane season. We have no other choice. We must act now. It is out of necessity that I support this short-term extension, but we must remain focused on a longer-term solution for the sake of those in the Gulf Coast States and high-risk flood areas. They depend on the National Flood Insurance Program.

Between now and the next time this extension expires, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to revisit and embrace H.R. 1309, our 5-year solution.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I will close with my remarks.

I'm hoping that perhaps Members of the Senate may be watching C–SPAN and watching us in the House. If not, I just simply urge their constituents to give them a call and ask them to move. It would be great to move on H.R. 1309. Because even if you do this temporary one, it's 30 days and we're right back here in another 4 weeks at the time that hurricanes are raging. We are really playing with fire here, and we're not doing the American people justice, and we're not doing right here.

As the gentleman from Louisiana just mentioned, vivid in our minds has got to be Katrina. We can talk about Andrew in Florida or you can talk about Hazel up in New York. Our whole country is coastline, and flooding is the worst natural disaster in our country in terms of loss of life, in terms of property. Folks need this financial assistance from this flood insurance program.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to move and do the right thing. I urge the American people to contact their Senators and let them know we do not need to be standing naked in the face of fierce hurricanes without help and without support simply because the United States Senate failed to act in the best interest of the American people.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROSS of Florida). Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

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

I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) for managing this bill and for all of his mention of how important this is. I also would again like to thank the gentlelady from California (Ms. WATERS) for being a cosponsor.

Mr. Speaker, I wish we did not have to be here on the floor once again with a short-term extension of the NFIP, but this program is too important to homeowners, to the housing market, and to the communities in the flood-prone areas for Congress to let it expire at the end of the month. It is also too in debt to continue without reform. And despite our best efforts in the House, the Senate has been unwilling or unable to pass a long-term NFIP reauthorization and reform bill.

As has been mentioned over and over, the House passed our 5-year NFIP reauthorization reform bill, H.R. 1309, last July with an overwhelming bipartisan majority of more than 400 votes. It also won unanimous support in the Financial Services Committee. But the Senate has not yet approved any version of flood reform. So here we are once again on the verge of a lapse in NFIP.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to stop playing games with this important program and start enacting long-term reforms now. With today's bill, we begin that process. First, it extends the program for an additional month to spare property owners and the housing market from another lapse. In addition, it would initiate several non-controversial reforms to develop private sector options in the flood insurance market. This is all part of the 5-year bill that we have.

Reforming the NFIP is simply too important to ignore. Our extension will give the Senate time to act, and it will begin the process of fixing NFIP to protect taxpayers from unnecessary risk.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5740, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my disappointment that this House is once again considering a short-term extension to the National Flood Insurance Program.

It has been nearly ten years since the program was last reauthorized, and the need for reauthorization has only grown more pressing. While a lapse in the program would be detrimental to countless homeowners, the program cannot continue to be sustained through a patchwork of short-term extensions.

Last July, the House of Representatives passed a long-term extension of the program with broad bipartisan support. Shortly after, the Senate Banking Committee reported its own reauthorization which is now simply gathering dust in the Senate. With the start of hurricane season only weeks away, now is not the time for the Senate's typical complacency.

Floods affect every state in the Union, and all Americans deserve the comfort of knowing they will be able to continue to benefit from the security that the National Flood Insurance Program has provided homeowners and lending institutions since 1968.

This program must be modernized and reformed to meet the realities of American homeowners and taxpayers. I urge my Senate colleagues to swiftly bring their reauthorization bill to the floor so that we can finally move a long-term reauthorization forward.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5740.

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. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I unintentionally voted ''aye'' on rollcall No. 253 when I intended to vote ''no'' on the motion to consider H. Res. 656, providing for consideration of the bill, H.R. 4970, to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, and providing for consideration of the bill, H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. I reiterate my strong support for the protection of women from acts of violence and my opposition to the reauthorization as currently written and brought forth.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4348, SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2012, PART II

Mr. BARROW. Mr. Speaker, under rule XXII, clause 7 (c), I hereby announce my intention to offer a motion to instruct on H.R. 4348, the conference report to extend Federal highway programs.

The form of the motion is as follows:

Mr. Barrow moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 4348 be instructed to insist on title II of the House bill, regarding approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4310.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 656 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. 4310.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1820

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. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes, with Mr. ROSS of Florida in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, which

overwhelmingly passed the Committee on Armed Services. In keeping with the committee's tradition of bipartisanship, Ranking Member SMITH and I worked collaboratively to produce this bill and solicited input from each of our members.

The legislation advances our national security objectives, provides support and logistical resources for our warfighters, and helps the United States confront the national security challenges of the 21st century. The bill authorizes $554 billion for national defense in the base budget, consistent with the allocation provided by the House Budget Committee. It also authorizes $88.5 billion for overseas contingency operations.

The legislation continues my priorities set forth when I was elected chairman. It contains no earmarks. It carefully analyzes the Defense Department for inefficiencies and savings. It helps ensure the Pentagon's new national defense strategy is not a hollow one. And despite historic cuts to our wartime military, it plugs critical capability and strategic shortfalls opened in the President's budget submission.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 achieves these goals by working to:

Number one, ensure our troops deployed in Afghanistan and globally, including the National Guard who are the Nation's first line of defense at home, have the equipment, resources, authorities, training, and time they need to successfully complete their missions and return home safely;

Number two, care for our warfighters, veterans, and their families with the support they've earned through their service;

Three, provide critical strategic capabilities in an era of austerity;

Fourth, mandate fiscal responsibility, transparency, and accountability within the Department of Defense; and

Finally, improve the relationship between the Defense Department and the supporting industrial base by eliminating red tape and incentivizing competition.

Mr. Chairman, in 2012 we affirmed that the President is authorized to detain certain al Qaeda terrorists pursuant to the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, or AUMF. Ten years after the horrific attacks of 9/11, it was time for Congress to once again ensure that our men and women in uniform have the authority they need to continue to fight and win the war on terror.

Foreign terrorist groups, such as al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, still pose a grave threat to all U.S. citizens. As a result of last year's bill, we've heard from a number of concerned citizens wondering what this affirmation meant in relation to the rights of U.S. citizens. As a result, in this year's bill, we've incorporated Representatives SCOTT RIGELL and JEFF LANDRY's Right to Habeas Corpus Act, which affirms the availability of the ''great writ'' habeas corpus to any person detained in the United States pursuant to the AUMF. As we all know, the writ of habeas corpus is the ultimate protection against any unlawful detention by the Executive.

I am especially proud of the bipartisan work done on defense industry reform. We have several provisions in our bill that adopt bipartisan recommendations to improve the relationship between the Pentagon and the defense industry. In a time of declining defense budgets, we can no longer afford to conduct business as usual. This bill encourages small businesses to compete for Pentagon contracts and closely scrutinizes every penny that the taxpayers send to the Armed Forces.

Finally, in light of the Pentagon's new national security strategy, it's Congress' constitutional obligation to ensure this new force posture is not a hollow one. To that end, we provide modest increases in combat capabilities, with a particular emphasis on our Navy fleet and critical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms.

I thank the chairman and ranking member of the Rules Committee for working with us to bring this measure to the floor. I urge all of my colleagues to support passage of this bill. In partnership with you, we look forward to passing the 51st consecutive National Defense Authorization Act.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

I want to thank Chairman MCKEON, the committee members, and the staff who, once again, did an outstanding bipartisan job in putting together this bill.

One of the paramount duties of our Congress is to provide for the common defense and, most importantly, make sure that our men and women who serve us in uniform have all the support they need to fulfill the missions that we ask them to do. I believe this bill meets that standard.

I thank the chairman for his willingness to work in a bipartisan fashion with me and my staff. I believe we have upheld the tradition of this committee and have shown that Congress can, in fact, work together to get things done, and I always appreciate that opportunity.

Most importantly, this bill prioritizes supporting the warfighter. We still have around 70,000 U.S. troops deployed in Afghanistan fighting the war. We need to make sure they have the equipment and support they need to do that. I believe this bill meets that mission.

This bill also recognizes the threats we face and adequately funds the need to meet those threats, most importantly, the threat from terrorist and nonstate actors like al Qaeda and their affiliates. We have strong support for the Special Operations Command as well as for intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance to make sure that we can continue to defeat the terrorist networks that would threaten us. Those are the top priorities.

We also make sure that our troops get the 1.7 percent pay raise they need and get the support for both the individual troops and for their families that are necessary to continue to serve us. We must always remember that we have an all-volunteer military. We are dependent upon the willingness of people to volunteer. We must make sure that we honor that service. We have done that, and we have done it quite well, to the point where we have the finest military the world has ever seen, and the support from this Congress is critical to maintaining that.

While there is much in this bill that I think is excellent and that I support, I will note just one caution as we go forward: Our bill is $8 billion over the Budget Control Act. It is over what the Senate is going to mark up. At some point, we are going to have to rationalize that and figure out how to make our national security strategy and our defense budget work in an era where our budgets are coming down.

We have a sizable deficit, and I believe it's critical that we put together a strategic plan and plan for the future. It's not enough to go year by year. We don't want to wake up 2 or 3 years from now and find out that we've funded more programs than we can afford to complete. We need a strategic vision, and we're going to have to work to get to that number and get to that cooperation with the Senate.

I also want to emphasize the importance of an amendment that I plan to offer that would change how we handle indefinite detention in military custody. I do not believe the executive branch should have that power to indefinitely detain or place in military custody people captured or arrested here in the U.S. I believe the United States Constitution and our due process system provides plenty of protections. We have arrested and convicted over 400 terrorists using that system. We have not used the indefinite detention in military custody power given to the President, and we have been able to protect ourselves. It's important that we protect the Constitution and that amendment is ruled in order, so I would hope that the full House would pass it.

I am very pleased with the bill. Again, I thank the chairman for his outstanding work in making sure that this bill supports the men and women in uniform who so bravely serve us. I believe it meets that objective. And I appreciate working with Mr. MCKEON, all of his staff, and all of the members of the committee.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1830

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just wanted to respond to my good friend, the ranking member, Mr. SMITH

from Washington. He's correct, we are $8 billion over the amount that was in the Deficit Reduction Act. In the budget the President submitted to us, it was $4 billion over. And we went about $3.7 billion above that. But in the overall budget that we will pass out of the House—and we did pass out of the House, under Budget Chairman RYAN—we increased the spending for defense due to the priorities that we feel are most important and the constitutional requirement that we have to provide for the common defense. But we will cut in other areas of the budget so that we comply fully with the Deficit Reduction Act.

At this time, Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the chairman of the Subcommittee of Tactical Air and Land Forces, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT).

Mr. BARTLETT. I rise in support of H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. I have the privilege of serving as the chairman of the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee. Our jurisdiction includes approximately $65 billion of Department of Defense research, development, and procurement programs within the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and the Air Force.

I want to first thank the subcommittee's ranking member, SILVESTRE REYES from Texas, and an incredible staff for their support in the hearing process and in completing the markup of this bill. Under the leadership of Chairman MCKEON and Ranking Member SMITH, the committee effort is truly bipartisan.

The committee's focus is to support the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families, providing the equipment they need and the support they so deserve. Our first priority is providing the equipment to support our military personnel serving in Afghanistan and other areas where they may be under threat of hostile actions.

Over $2 billion in the President's budget request is recommended to be authorized to address urgent operational needs for the warfighter, to include counter-improvised explosive device requirements. An additional $500 million is provided for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account.

The committee bill sustains the Nation's heavy armored production base by maintaining minimum sustained production of upgrade modifications for Abrams tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, and Hercules recovery vehicles. The Army's budget request would result in a production break of 3 to 4 years for the upgrade of these heavy-armored vehicles, which would negatively impact many small businesses.

The committee believes maintaining a minimum sustained production is a better alternative for taxpayer dollars than closing production lines and then paying to reopen the production lines years later. Minimum sustained production would also retain the valuable workforce and supplier base that would otherwise be lost and provide upgraded vehicles to the Army Heavy Brigade Combat teams.

The committee bill would also retain the Air Force's Global Hawk Block 30 unmanned intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft to support the deployed warfighter rather than placing these aircraft in storage, as the Air Force plan would do.

In addition the committee bill would fund over 150 helicopters of varying types for the Army and approximately 70 fighter aircraft of varying types for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Chairman MCKEON and Ranking Member SMITH for their support in providing an excellent bill to support the men and women of our armed forces.

I strongly urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank our ranking member and my colleagues for their indulgence in letting me go a little out of turn here.

By most counts, the United States Department of Defense is the second largest organization in the world, behind only the rest of the United States Federal Government, if you took out the Department of Defense. It is the only organization of that size that doesn't have audited financial statements. So in an organization that spends over $500 billion a year, we cannot say to the taxpayers of our country with certainty exactly what is spent where, by whom, and for what.

My friend, Congressman MIKE CONAWAY from Texas, has made correction of this problem a special mission of his since he joined this institution. And I would like to thank him because he chaired a panel that Chairman MCKEON and Ranking Member SMITH saw fit to appoint in this Congress to look at how to fix that problem. The solution to the problem, I think, is well on the way to being achieved. Secretary Panetta and Mr. Hale, who's the comptroller of the Pentagon, worked diligently on this and made it a very high priority. And the panel on which I was privileged to serve had voluminous hearings to find out the progress that we were making.

Suffice it to say that we are impatient—and we should be. But I do believe that the cooperative relationship between the panel created by the chairman and the ranking member and the Department of Defense is leading us to the day when we will have a clear-eyed assessment of exactly what is being spent on what, by whom, and when.

There will be an amendment, in all probability, offered later in this debate which would codify the deadline for reaching some of the milestones along that path. I will respectfully oppose that amendment because I think codification of this requirement will actually retard our progress rather than enhance it.

So I look forward to debate about all aspects of this bill. I'm proud to have supported the bill in the full committee markup.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the vice chairman of the Armed Service Committee and chairman of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

Mr. THORNBERRY. I commend Chairman MCKEON for his leadership in developing this bill throughout the course of the year and appreciate the working relationship that he and the ranking member have, as evidenced by the fact that this bill was reported out of committee by a vote of 56–5. And I certainly agree with the comments of Mr. ANDREWS. One of the bipartisan goals of this committee is to make sure the taxpayers get every dollar of value possible for the money we spend for defense, and that is a goal that I think we are making good progress toward.

Mr. Chairman, I want to rise to express special appreciation to the members of the staff of the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, especially Mr. LANGEVIN, our ranking member.

To summarize that portion of the bill, I think one could do it in three parts. One is to support the people and missions of the U.S. Special Operations Command while also providing objective oversight of what they do. Special Operations Forces are at the forefront of protecting this country, but that also puts them at the forefront of a lot of legal and policy issues, and that makes communication between the Congress and the Special Operations Forces and their lawyers and other overseers especially important.

Secondly, our portion of the bill tries to sow and nurture the seeds of future capability, such as our science and technology programs. It's always tempting to cut research and development in tight budget times, but if you do that, then you are handicapping yourself from having the capability you need in the future.

And, thirdly, this mark tries to take several steps forward on oversight and policy in the critical new domain of warfare of cyber. Obviously, we have talked a lot about that in recent weeks on the floor of this House.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I just make the point that we have lots of problems around the world, but this bill comes to the floor in a time of war. So as we come with these various amendments that cut this, that, and the other thing, we all need to keep in mind that there are still people out there trying to kill as many Americans as they possibly can, as recent news reports reflect. We ought to be cautious about that.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES), the ranking member of the Tactical Air and Land Subcommittee.

Mr. REYES. I want to thank our chairman from California and the

ranking member for, again, leading the way in a bipartisan effort.

Although probably not a perfect bill, under the circumstances, with troops still deployed in war zones, I think a bipartisan agreement to this very important and critical legislation was reached. I especially want to thank my chairman, Chairman BARTLETT, for working and continuing the tradition of working on a bipartisan basis. I am pleased that our portion of H.R. 4310 supports, I believe, all the high-priority acquisition programs in the President's budget.

Some examples are: it fully funds the Army's Ground Combat Vehicle program at about $640 million. It provides $5.8 billion for Army helicopters, UAVs and other aviation platforms and upgrades. It also provides $1.6 billion for 21 V–22 Ospreys, which are a critical component of supporting our troops and their operations in Afghanistan today.

□ 1840

It further provides $2.2 billion for upgrading the Army's tactical communications network. It increases funding for the Abrams tanks by $181 million. It also increases funding for Bradley fighting vehicles by $140 million. And more than anything, it protects our industrial base at this pivotal and critical time to ensure that we don't lose the expertise and the quality workforce that we have in this country and all their capabilities.

But I guess the most important legislative provision in H.R. 4310 is legislation requiring the Air Force to continue to operate the Global Hawk Block 30 unmanned aerial system, which just reached operational capability in August of 2011. This is important because testimony before our committee underscores what we have known all along and in the 4 years I was chairman of the Intelligence Committee, that we have to continue to emphasize ISR capability. This legislation, H.R. 4310, holds the Air Force to its plan from last year to continue to operate both the Global Hawk and U–2 systems through 2014. So I ask all Members to support this critical piece of legislation.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for yielding and for his leadership for the national defense of our country.

I rise in support of the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act. As you've heard, Mr. Chairman, this bill reflects a bipartisan effort to address the many issues impacting the readiness of our military.

This year's bill prohibits funding from being used to plan for another round of BRAC, which I believe would be founded on a flawed premise that assumes the administration's proposal for a reduced force structure is correct. I categorically refuse to accept a diminished Department of Defense and believe that additional force structure is necessary to support our combatant commanders.

We have also done our best to craft a bipartisan way forward on depot maintenance reform, returning the Nation to a long-standing balance between the public and private sectors. Although I will admit this bill is not all things to all people, we look forward to continuing to improve these portions of the bill in conference.

This bill also takes several steps to ensure our Navy readiness, including the restoration of funding to retain three Ticonderoga class guided missile cruisers that the Navy proposed to retire well before the end of their expected service life.

Finally, in this year's bill, we address the administration's efforts to reduce military and civilian workforce, while increasing its contractor full-time equivalents. By building upon last year's effort to direct the DOD to create a policy for total force management, we direct GAO, in this year's bill, to provide their assessment of what measures DOD is taking to appropriately balance its current and future workforce structure against its requirements.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the members of the Armed Services Committee, especially my Readiness Subcommittee ranking member, Ms. BORDALLO, for their help in providing the unyielding support for the men and women who so heavily rely on our efforts, and our staff who work tirelessly to produce this product.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ), the ranking member on the Strategic Forces Subcommittee.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Chairman, I thank our ranking member for the time, and I also want to thank Mr. TURNER, our chairman on the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, for his leadership, and all of the members who work on the Strategic Forces Subcommittee for all of their work and contributions to this year's mark.

I think that there are a lot of issue areas that we can agree upon, especially in the Strategic Forces Committee, to make our Nation stronger and to really look after our nuclear arsenal.

I think there are particular provisions that I really like in this bill, for example, the cost effective and accountability on some of these things. And supporting nuclear nonproliferation, for example, is a very important issue, and I think this bill does a good job on that. Maintaining a safe and secure and reliable nuclear arsenal, I think that is also important. Fully authorizing the environmental cleanup that we have to do related to these activities, that is also included in this bill. Increasing the regional missile defense systems that we have that protect our troops when they are, for example, in Europe, when they're deployed, and also our allies for the short- and medium-range missile attacks that might happen, protecting long-term and cost-effective investments in our military space assets, these are all areas that we have agreed upon.

However, I am extremely concerned about some of the other issue areas where we do not agree. For example, provisions that impede nuclear weapons reductions, I think that is incredibly important to allow the administration to move forward, not only with New START Treaty, but also to look at other ways in which we can bring down our arsenal if we don't need it.

The governance and management reforms that will undermine independent oversight related to health and safety, including nuclear safety.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield the gentlelady an additional 1 minute.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. I thank my ranking member.

These are very important to our people who work in this arena. What is their safety going to be when they're working with nuclear weapons in the complexes that we have? I think that the standards and the way, the management way that the Republicans like to do are going to probably cause some inconsistent standards in protecting our workers—and risk people's lives, quite frankly.

Increasing funding for nuclear weapons by more than $400 million over the President's budget request when our own Pentagon didn't want that, or increasing funding for the ground-based midcourse defense program by over $350 million while there are still test failures going out, when we have had 9 of 17 tests fail on us, then I don't think we should be continuing to invest in the same system. We should look and try to take care and find out what went wrong.

I look forward to trying to work these things out in the conference.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to my friend and colleague, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER).

Mr. TURNER. I thank Chairman MCKEON.

Mr. Chairman, much of this bill is totally bipartisan. Two important provisions relate to missile defense and our nuclear weapons infrastructure modernization. Let me talk briefly about those two.

The first, in this bill we restore the funding for our national missile defense system, the budget for which the President has repeatedly slashed. This bill also sets up a third missile defense site for the east coast, adding another layer to homeland defense.

The bill fully funds the nuclear modernization program that President Obama promised when he sought ratification of the New START Treaty. National security demands Members make a choice—fully fund modernization or don't implement New START.

Also a focus of this bill is reform of the National Nuclear Security Administration. If we didn't strike the right balance after several bipartisan sessions and hearings Ms. SÁNCHEZ and I convened, we have a long process ahead of us to work to get it right.

As the National Academies, Strategic Posture Commission, and others have found, NNSA is, quite simply, broken and cannot afford to be left unfixed. I am absolutely committed to working with the minority and the administration to ensure a more efficient NNSA that has the nuclear deterrent and safety as unchallenged priorities. I look forward to an administration proposal on the subject.

I thank the gentlelady from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ), our ranking member, for her support, leadership, and contributions to our process thus far this year. I want to thank Chairman MCKEON for his leadership.

Nuclear weapons and missile defense are two very important issues for the safety and security of our Nation. Our subcommittee has taken a strong commitment to these, and we look forward to this bill moving forward to the Senate as we try to strengthen both our missile defense capability and our nuclear deterrent.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from California (Mrs. DAVIS) ranking member on the Personnel Subcommittee.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I thank Chairman MCKEON and Ranking Member SMITH for their leadership, and Chairman WILSON for making our subcommittee work a bipartisan effort. I also want to thank the staff for producing this important piece of legislation.

I am pleased the bill includes provisions that are important to our men and women in uniform, such as a 1.7 percent pay raise, improvements and additional efforts to combat sexual assault, transition assistance for members leaving the service, and Impact Aid funding for our military children.

However, I am concerned because the majority on this committee adopted several amendments that distract from the wonderful work that we have done. Two provisions deal with gays in the military. The first would prohibit same-sex marriage ceremonies from being performed on military installations.

□ 1850

Mr. Chairman, we already had this debate, and the American people support gays and lesbians openly serving in our military. Denying a servicemember the ability to use a military facility to hold a ceremony that others have access to is wrong and it's discriminatory. But most importantly, that ceremony would not be in violation of DOMA because DOMA only states that a marriage is between a man and a woman. It literally does not say anything else.

The second provision that was passed in committee is even more troubling to me. This provision would seek to protect the religious beliefs of chaplains and servicemembers. The issue of protecting the religious beliefs of chaplains was already addressed last year, and the law on this is very clear:

A military chaplain who, as a matter of conscience or moral principle, does not wish to perform a marriage may not be required to do so.

So this really comes down to protecting discriminatory acts against gays and lesbians in uniform, which is contrary to the military core values of good order and discipline. I hope we can resolve this issue in a way that does not allow discrimination against a group of servicemembers based solely on their sexual orientation.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. The other issue I want to raise—and several of my colleagues have raised this already—is the fact that this bill is $8 billion over the Budget Control Act. While we made a number of decisions to restore cuts from the President's budget, we will need to resolve this difference at some point, and this means that programs will need to be cut. My hope is that the pay and benefits of our brave men and women will not be the bill-payer when we must reduce spending in this bill.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN).

Mr. WITTMAN. I'd like to thank Chairman MCKEON and Ranking Member SMITH for their leadership in moving H.R. 4310, the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, as it overwhelmingly passed the House Armed Services Committee.

The provisions of this bill aptly demonstrate our collective commitment to our Nation's heroes—the men and women of our armed services who sacrifice so much each and every day for all of us. I've seen their efforts firsthand, having the opportunity to travel five times to Afghanistan, and I recently had the opportunity to visit wounded warriors in Bethesda and Balboa. Each visit reinforces how much this Nation owes the members of our all-volunteer force. Against this backdrop, I have worked to ensure that decisions made in Congress fulfill the appropriate oversight role in taking care of our troops and veterans and securing our Nation's defense.

The bill before us today lives up to those solemn commitments. In particular, this bill blocks the proposed increase in TRICARE fees proposed by the administration. The administration's proposal places an unconscionable burden on our oldest and most vulnerable veterans by increasing their fees by 345 percent over a 10-year period. The bill recognizes our budgetary limits, but also keeps faith with America's veterans and servicemembers.

This bill ensures that as we consider transition in Afghanistan, we adequately understand associated risks. Based on the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee findings, this bill calls for periodic assessments of the factors resulting in such trends and the effectiveness of transfer agreements we've negotiated with foreign countries. This bill, through an amendment, also requires an assessment focused on similar trends for the Parwan Detention Facility in Afghanistan.

Finally, this bill helps to preserve our Nation's maritime dominance by authorizing new construction of up to 10 destroyers and up to 10 submarines, as well as preventing early retirement of three cruisers. These assets will provide for our common defense, ensure we have the necessary resources for our strategic pivot to the Asia-Pacific, and help to maintain a healthy shipbuilding industrial base.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, can you give us an update on the time left on each side.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Washington has 17 minutes, and the gentleman from California has 14½ minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), who is the ranking member on the Emerging Threats Subcommittee.

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I would like to thank Chairman MCKEON, Ranking Member SMITH, Chairman THORNBERRY, and the members of the committee, as well as the staff, for their efforts in crafting this year's bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act, which affirms our commitment to the dedicated men and women of our military, the infrastructure that enables their efforts, and the research and development required to maintain our technological edge.

I am particularly pleased that H.R. 4310 includes provisions I advocated to prevent the proposed cut in the production of the peerless Virginia-class submarines. These electric boats—which are critical to our national security and built in my district through Quonset/Davisville by the hardworking men and women that work there—are being built ahead of schedule and under budget. This bill preserves the two-boat-per-year model that has enabled such great efficiencies.

I would also like to note the inclusion of my amendment to accelerate

the deployment of the most promising directed-energy initiatives. Just recently, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments issued a report that clearly showed that many directed energy technologies have matured to the point that ''cultural factors and the lack of resources, not technological maturity'' are the most significant barriers to operational deployment. These technologies have the potential to fundamentally shift how our military operates in the complex environments of the future and enables DOD's objectives of a ''smaller, lighter, more agile, flexible joint force that can conduct a full range of military activities.''

Additionally, this legislation prioritizes and supports the Department's cybersecurity and IT efforts. Cyber has long been a chief focus of mine; and while I'm encouraged that this legislation continues to address this critical issue, much remains to be done. FBI Director Mueller has said that cybersecurity could soon be more of a threat than terrorism, yet our Federal Government still lacks a single point of accountability for cybersecurity, and our critical infrastructure lacks many basic protections.

I am hopeful that the Rules Committee will allow floor consideration of two amendments I offered that would enable a comprehensive approach to cybersecurity across the government and secure the infrastructure on which our military and our Nation depend.

On balance, this is a good bill. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their hard work, as well as the staff.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, a member of the Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHILLING).

Mr. SCHILLING. I'd like to thank Chairman BUCK MCKEON for his hard work and dedication to getting this put together, and all of the staff members.

I rise today in support of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. This bill shows our support for our troops and allows them to continue their mission in defending our country. We are facing difficult fiscal choices, but we must not penalize our brave men and women who are in harm's way.

I am particularly supportive of how this bill supports small businesses that contract with the Department of Defense, our organic base that ensures our soldiers are equipped and ensures that those who would do harm to our Nation are not allowed within its borders. I am also pleased that it will provide insight on how TRICARE can be better suited to the needs of the children of our warfighters, and that it will provide more flexibility for the DOD to bring our soldiers who are missing in action home from previous conflicts.

I am privileged to represent the Rock Island Arsenal in the Illinois 17th District. These hardworking men and women support our warfighters with the tools they need to accomplish their goals and missions. I look forward to continuing my work on the House Armed Services Committee with my colleagues to ensure that our organic base is ready and able to respond when our warfighters need them.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in support of this important bill and pass it for the 51st year in a row.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, at this point, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN).

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I rise this evening to highlight the Defense Business Panel's work over the past 6 months and discuss our proposals for a series of procurement, contracting, and export control reforms that seek to help small and medium-sized businesses access the nearly $400 billion-a-year defense market.

Burdensome regulations and arcane auditing requirements are driving many companies to quit the defense market and are deterring new suppliers from entering the market. I am pleased that many of the bipartisan recommendations from the Defense Business Panel's report, ''Challenges to Doing Business with the Department of Defense,'' have made it into this year's National Defense Authorization Act and have received overwhelming support by the HASC committee members.

To ensure the Pentagon uses small businesses more, the FY13 NDAA requires the Department of Defense to award 25 percent of the total value of all prime contracts each year to small businesses. The panel heard from many companies around the Nation about how to modernize our export control regime. Tomorrow we may be debating an amendment that would grant the administration authority to remove commercial satellites and components from the Munitions List to the Commerce Control List. I would strongly urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

□ 1900

The panel focused on the steps that can be taken to commercialize innovative products that originate from small businesses. This year's NDAA will restore 1 percent funding for expenses for the commercialization and readiness program and will require program offices to import SBIR Phase 2 programs into programs of record, when appropriate.

We accomplished much to help small businesses over the panel's 6 months of work, but we've only scratched the surface. More can be done to help small businesses contract with the DOD, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to implement these changes.

Finally, I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), who is the chairman of this panel, for his leadership, and the chairman of the full committee and ranking member, Mr. MCKEON and Mr. SMITH, for appointing the panel.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEST), my friend and colleague, a member of the Armed Services Committee, and a man who has led troops in battle.

Mr. WEST. Thank you, Chairman MCKEON, and thank you, Ranking Member SMITH.

I stand today to offer my support for H.R. 4310, Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

To echo the comments of my colleague from Washington (Mr. LARSEN), I am very happy to see that the recommendations from the Defense Business Panel will be included in this legislation because we have to streamline our processing and our contracting opportunities as well for our small businesses.

I'm also very happy to know that the End Strength Reduction Act was included in this legislation to make sure that we have the proper procedures in tearing down the reduction of our forces, and making sure we periodically go back and reassess our national security objectives to make sure that our end strength of our military meets those objectives.

I'm also very pleased to know that we continue to protect the well-earned TRICARE health care benefits for our veterans and for military retirees, staying away from the tripling of those health care rates. We will continue to index that toward the COLA.

We will continue to provide for the proper support of our military families and their children and the programs on our installations.

But most importantly, I am very happy to know that we will continue to resource our soldiers, our sailors, our airmen, and our Marines, because as we are standing here today debating this piece of legislation, someone is out there being the watchman on the wall. Someone is out there about to go on a patrol, and they are trusting and depending upon us to do the right thing through the amendment process of this legislation to ensure that they are given the resources so they can provide victory and once again provide for the common defense of this great Nation.

We must make sure that our military cannot be seen as a bill payer for fiscal irresponsibility. And the most important thing is, when you look at our track record for predicting the next conflict, it is not a good track record.

We must make sure that we do not destroy our military and decimate its capabilities and capacities while we're trying to rectify the fiscal situation here. Let's stay focused on our primary responsibility of providing for the common defense.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE), the ranking member on the Seapower Subcommittee.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Chairman, as the ranking member of the Seapower

and Projection Forces Subcommittee, I want to thank Chairman AKIN for his hard work in helping our subcommittee put together our portion of the FY 13 National Defense Authorization Act. Throughout the process, there was a strong bipartisan effort to deliver what is truly needed by our men and women in uniform.

There are a number of provisions with which I'm particularly pleased: The multiyear procurement authority for up to 10 Virginia Class attack submarines. This provision also gives incremental funding authority and restores advance procurement in FY 13 that will allow the Navy to procure a second Virginia class submarine in FY 13.

Also, the multiyear procurement authority for up to 10 DDG–51 Arleigh Burke Class Destroyers and the extension of the Ford-Class Aircraft Carrier incremental funding from 5 years to 6 years.

The bill also contains several Littoral Combat Ship provisions. However, I want to be clear that these provisions do not indicate that the subcommittee no longer supports the LCS program. These provisions simply ask the Navy to update the subcommittee on the program's status, and ask the GAO to analyze the program and ensure that any issues that previously have occurred will have been addressed and corrected. This will provide the Navy the opportunity to address any and all concerns that may still exist.

I want to thank our committee for its hard work, Chairman MCKEON and Ranking Member SMITH for their excellent work and leadership. I also want to thank the HASC staff, Tom MacKenzie, Heath Bope, Phil MacNaughton and Emily Waterlander, and the personal staff, Justin Johnson, Blair Milligan and Kaitlin Helms, for their efforts and expertise throughout this authorization process.

This is a bill we could and ought to support, and stand up for our men and women in uniform. I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), my friend and colleague and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your leadership on behalf of the military families, servicemembers, and veterans of our country.

The Military Personnel titles of the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act are a product of an open, bipartisan process. These personnel titles provide our warfighters, veterans, and military families the care and support they deserve, additionally ensuring that proposed drawdown plans do not cut to the heart of the Army and Marine Corps.

Specifically, this year's proposal will first authorize a troop pay increase of 1.7 percent, and extend bonuses and special pay; additionally, limit the end strength reduction for the active Army and Marine Corps; also provide significant new regulations for combating sexual assault within the military, and extend access to family housing and commissary and exchange benefits for troops who are involuntarily separated.

Additionally, we will extend some TRICARE benefits to members of the Selected Reserve who are involuntarily separated. And finally, make clear that the nonmilitary contributions to health care benefits through a career of service represent prepayment of health care premiums in retirement.

In conclusion, I want to thank Ranking Member Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS and her staff for her contributions in this process. We are joined, of course, by dedicated members of the subcommittee. Their recommendations are clearly reflected in this mark.

Finally, I want to appreciate the service and dedication of the subcommittee majority staff, John Chapla, Debra Wada, Jeanette James, Mike Higgins, Craig Greene and Jim Weiss, along with my military legislative assistant, Chad Sydnor, and Military Fellow, Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant Michelle King.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4310.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO), the ranking member of the Readiness Subcommittee.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the defense authorization bill for FY13. The underlying legislation continues to make sure that our men and women in uniform are provided with the resources to be well trained and equipped.

Although the war in Iraq is over and we begin a drawdown of the surge forces in Afghanistan, we continue to face challenges with our readiness. The bill supports the Department's reset efforts, which are important to addressing readiness challenges in our global commands, particularly in the U.S. Pacific Command.

The bill provides authorization for more than $11 billion in funding for military construction projects, including family housing. And our bill does not authorize an unwarranted round of base closures and realignments.

The bill also continues this committee's support for the realignment of military forces in the Pacific, including the military buildup on Guam. As we refocus on the Asia-Pacific region, our bill makes efforts to remove restrictions that are impeding the DOD's ability to move forward with the realignment. The revised agreement between the United States and Japan is a step in the right direction, and our bill helps move that effort forward.

I'm greatly concerned by amendments that were adopted at Full Committee markup that roll back efforts by DOD to invest in biofuels. This investment is needed for our long-term security needs, both operationally and at military installations across the world. The cost of traditional fields has skyrocketed, and those increased costs are eating away at readiness requirements. We need to make the investment in alternative fuels now, in order to free the Department from the shackle of foreign fossil fuels in the future.

I strongly support the bill's prohibition on the retirement of the Global Hawk aircraft. The Global Hawk is a critical ISR asset, and the Air Force rationale for wanting to retire this aircraft and continue flying on aging aircraft for the foreseeable future was lacking. As we refocus to the Asia-Pacific region, commanders in the AOR need more ISR assets, not less. I'm glad we keep the Global Hawk Block 30 aircraft flying.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

□ 1910

Ms. BORDALLO. Again, Mr. Chairman, along these lines, I believe the bill takes important steps to protect the Air National Guard from unwarranted cuts in mission realignments. I appreciate that the bill does not increase most TRICARE fees and copays and that it prohibits the department from implementing new fees.

I want to thank Chairman FORBES for his strong partnership on the Readiness Subcommittee and also to thank members of the staff.

Again, I support the bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the measure as well.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LANDRY).

Mr. LANDRY. I would like to thank Chairman MCKEON for working so diligently with me to protect the civil liberties that we enjoy so much in our country.

Mr. Chairman, as we debate the protection of these civil liberties in this bill, we need to ask ourselves: What are we trying to provide? We must protect every citizen's basic due process rights. What are those basic due process rights?

Specifically, it would be the right to notice, the opportunity to be heard, the right to a neutral forum, the right to counsel when before the court, and the right to an appeal. Some of my colleagues are proposing the creation of additional rights. Doing so does not further protect us under the Constitution nor does it further the protections of our constituents.

They say we must allow foreign terrorists captured domestically to be tried in criminal court, enveloping them with all of the protections granted to civil criminals. It gives them access to our national security intelligence that ordinary Americans currently are denied. We incentivize them to come to America. The base text of

the bill makes it clear and precise that anyone detained is afforded access to the basic rights of due process that I mentioned earlier. Therefore, those basic rights are now enshrined.

I urge Members to support the underlying bill, accompanied by the Gohmert-Landry-Rigell amendment, and to oppose any other attempts to create additional rights for foreign terrorists.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1 minute.

There are no additional rights contained in this amendment. We have the rights that are in the Constitution that are the due process. The gentleman's comment that additional rights are being granted by this is patently false. The Constitution is clear. It provides all persons in the United States the same rights. All we are doing is going back to the Constitution and repealing the authority of the President to circumvent those rights and reduce them. That's a very critical point that we will talk further about tomorrow.

I am now pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman.

Yesterday, we debated H. Res. 568, which draws a red line for military action at Iran's achieving a nuclear weapons ''capability,'' a nebulous and undefined term that could include a civilian nuclear program. As a result, the language in that bill makes a negotiated solution impossible.

Now, this bill, H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act, in section 1221 makes military action against Iran a U.S. policy. Right in the bill, it talks about deployments and military action. To create a plan, under article B of section 1222, it says that the Secretary of Defense shall prepare a plan for the Fifth Fleet to conduct military deployments. In section A of article II, it says that there should be prepositioning, sufficient supplies of aircraft, munitions—bombs, fuel, and other materials—for both air- and sea-based missions against Iran. So that sets the stage for war. Then section B calls for an execution of the war, bolstering United States' capabilities to launch a sustained sea and air campaign against a range of Iranian nuclear and military targets.

They're not threatening us. We're threatening them with this. Then we call for a showdown in the Strait of Hormuz in section C.

Now look. We've been through this before. I led this Congress in October of 2002 to challenge the Bush administration's march towards war against Iraq, and it proved that it was wrong to do that. There were no weapons of mass destruction. This is Iraq all over again, and we should at least have a separate debate on whether or not we should be recommending an attack on Iran without including it in this bill.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I rise in support of section 552 of H.R. 4310. In fact, I rise in favor of the entire National Defense Authorization Act but specifically of this provision which justly awards the victims of Fort Hood and the Arkansas recruiting station shootings with the Purple Heart.

Mr. Chairman, I have the distinct honor of representing Fort Hood, Texas. We call it the ''Great Place.'' The day after the attack at Fort Hood, I was there. At that point in time, I began working on legislation to award combat status to the victims so that they could all receive the appropriate benefits that they deserve.

The shootings at Fort Hood and in Little Rock left 14 dead and 44 wounded. These soldiers were at a deployment processing center in Fort Hood and at a recruiting station in Arkansas when they were fired upon. Many of them at Fort Hood were getting ready to go to war or were returning from war for the reassignment to other assignments. In my opinion, the shooters extended the battlefield from Iraq and Afghanistan to Fort Hood and Little Rock in order to claim their targets before they reached their destinations in Iraq or Afghanistan.

While I am pleased to see the victims receive the Purple Heart, we should continue to work towards awarding the victims combat status and the appropriate recognition that they may deserve, including recognizing the civilians who were killed. But make no mistake, at Fort Hood, they targeted soldiers.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, I ask my colleagues to support this language but to continue to work towards awarding combat status for the victims as well. This is a bipartisan issue. I am very grateful to Chairman KING for getting on board with this issue and for driving the force, as are all of our soldiers, and I am very grateful for the bipartisan consideration this concept had on both sides of the aisle. I support the National Defense Authorization Act. It is good for our country.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI).

Mr. GARAMENDI. To the ranking member and the chair of the committee, thank you for a long slog of hard work and for the production of a bill that has much good in it.

Certainly, we have to provide for our military. We need a strong, agile, smart, and deadly national defense program. That's certainly in this bill. We also need to provide for our soldiers—for the men and women—and those who serve this country, and that's in this bill. The issue of those who have served and who have come home remains an issue that we'll probably take up in other legislation.

Provisions in the bill also provide for the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance necessary for us to be smart, and the bill provides for us to be agile in air mobility. Those are good things. However, there are many parts of this bill that I find objectionable, which has led to my ''no'' vote on this legislation. Let me quickly list those:

Certainly, we've already talked about, here on the floor, the issue of due process. It needs to be addressed, and I want to congratulate the ranking member of the committee for his work in developing a very good proposal that deals with the due process issue, which provides that every person in this country has full access to the civil liberties in the Constitution;

The Afghanistan war is not taken care of in this bill. In fact, there are provisions in this bill that, in all likelihood, would increase the number of soldiers in Afghanistan by some 20,000 and leave them there in perpetuity. We cannot do this. We've got to bring this war to an end very, very quickly, and the bill does not go in that direction. In fact, it goes in the opposite direction. We just heard a discussion about Iran, and I will simply second that portion of the bill as being out of place and incorrect;

There are also things in this bill that are a vast waste of money: missile defense on the east coast, a missile system that doesn't work to protect us from a nonexistent threat. Why would you spend $100 million this year and up to $5 million to $7 million in the succeeding 2 years? We ought not do that;

Some things are also to be found at home. The Lawrence Livermore Labs need to be protected.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

□ 1920

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to the time that is remaining.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from California has 5½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Washington has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. MCKEON. Does the gentleman have further speakers?

Mr. SMITH of Washington. We do not have further speakers at this point, and I believe we're prepared to close.

Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time.

First of all, I want to again thank the chairman and thank the folks who worked on this bill. As you see from the debate, there are a lot of controversial issues that wound up in this bill, issues of enormous importance, from our policy towards countries like Afghanistan and Iran, to civil liberties and on. It takes a great deal of work on behalf of the staff and a great deal of commitment to a bipartisan spirit to work through that, have fair debates, have the votes, carry on, and always remember that underlying it all is

making sure that we fund the defense of this country, and we fund the troops who are tasked with protecting it. I think our committee and our staff do an outstanding job of dealing with those challenges.

I want to talk again about the indefinite-detention issue. The gentleman who spoke a couple of minutes ago raised some concerns, and I think it gives us a pretty good preview of what some of the opposition to that amendment is going to be tomorrow. I just want to counter those arguments.

The first notion that ''additional rights'' are being granted as a result of this is quite simply absurd. What this says is: the due process that's in the Constitution is what you get if you are arrested. What we have done in this body is empowered the President to get rid of those rights in certain cases and indefinitely detain people without charge in many instances and without trial. What we're saying is that it is an enormous amount of power to grant the Executive, and it is not necessary. President Bush did not use that authority for the last 5 years he was in the administration, President Obama has not used it, and yet we have protected this country. To give away that basic due-process right, if you are arrested—that you have the basic rights in the Constitution—is no small thing, and it is not necessary.

Lastly, I want to talk about this argument that somehow this will incentivize terrorists to come to the U.S. I've heard a lot of arguments. That has got to be the dumbest one I've ever heard. First of all, it is sad to say there are many terrorists affiliated with al Qaeda who are trying very hard to come here and inflict harm on us right now. That's why we have all kinds of efforts in this bill and in Homeland Security to stop them. They are not going to become any less incentivized to do that whether this bill passes or not. Sadly, we must deal with that.

Second of all, they are certainly not going to want to come here and operate as opposed to operating in someplace outside of the U.S. where we don't have as much reach. That argument has nothing to do with this amendment. This is a very straightforward argument I think we should have. Is this a power that the President needs to have to keep us safe? It is not. It is undeniably an enormous amount of power to go outside of the Constitution, to go outside of due process, and empower the executive branch to indefinitely detain somebody without the due process that we've developed over the course of 230 years. That is an enormous step for this Congress to take.

We have to ask ourselves the question: Is it necessary? It clearly is not. We have arrested, prosecuted, and stopped countless terrorist attacks over the course of the last 8 years. Over 400 terrorists were arrested, convicted, and imprisoned in this country, such as Abjulmutallab, who was the underwear bomber in Detroit in December of 2008. He was stopped, arrested, interrogated, prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced to life in prison.

We have a justice system and a law enforcement system in this country that is more than adequate to meet the threat. We do not have to undermine the Constitution to do that. That will be the core of the argument. I look forward to those who are opposed to it arguing why that doesn't keep us safe. I think it will be a great debate, and I'll urge people to vote for it. But I hope we'll have that public debate on the floor tomorrow. It is an incredibly important issue no matter which side of it you're on. It is an important issue that is worthy of this full House having a full and robust debate, and I look forward to doing that tomorrow.

Again, I recognize all of the important things that are in this bill. I'm confident when we come to the amendment process, we will have a bill worthy of support of this House, and I will then urge Members to support it so we can fund the defense of this country and fund the brave men and women who serve our country in the Armed Forces, and make sure they have all the support they need to do what we ask them to do in defending this country.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, there has been a lot of work done on this bill, and I want to thank my ranking member—my partner in this effort—and all of the staff who have put in countless hours to get us to this point for the work that they have done.

As you can see from the opening debate, we have many things that we agree on and some things that we disagree on. I feel good about that because I once heard that if two people agree on everything, one of them is an idiot. I think that there will be things that we have honest disagreements on, and we'll have much to talk about tomorrow. And I'm sure we'll have many hours to do that.

Mr. Chairman, for the second year, there have been misconceptions raised by the ACLU and others relating to last year's provision dealing with the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force. In 2012, we affirmed that the President is authorized to detain certain belligerents who are part of or substantially supporting al Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces. This interpretation was not a new creation. It has been used by both the Bush and Obama administrations and has been upheld by our Federal courts.

The Wall Street Journal editorial board has described the NDAA's affirmation as a ''modest law.'' Former Attorneys General Meese and Mukasey have noted that:

Given the continuing threat posed by groups like al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the affirmation was a critical step in reinforcing the military's legal authorities to combat terror.

Importantly, at no point did last year's bill detract from the rights of U.S. citizens. No one could possibly be in favor of the unlawful detention of innocent American citizens. And nothing could be further from the aim of the NDAA, which was to reinforce the protection of American citizens from terrorist attacks. While we felt confident that the NDAA in no way impacted this issue, we took the feedback we received seriously and analyzed the issue. In particular, I worked very closely with my colleague, Chairman SMITH of the Judiciary Committee, as well as numerous outside experts and former U.S. Government officials.

In acknowledgement of the concerns that have been raised, we felt that it was important in this year's bill to explicitly reaffirm that anybody detained in the United States, pursuant to the AUMF, can challenge the lawfulness of their detention in U.S. Federal court. The great writ of habeas corpus is a citizen's most fundamental protection against any unlawful depravation of liberty.

Some want to go further and have this bill prohibit military detention and interrogation of foreign terrorists in the United States. And for all the blood and treasure we have spent taking the fight to the enemy to prevent terrorists from coming to the United States, I find this astonishing. Why would we weaken our ability to fight foreign terrorists here at home? Why would we take lawful options off the table for our national security officials? We must not forget that it is, in fact, foreign terrorist organizations like the al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula who would like nothing more than to deprive us our life and liberty. We must have all lawful options available to us in order to effectively dismantle and defeat them.

My understanding is that the Rules Committee is meeting as we speak. There have been, I think, about 240 amendments submitted to be debated on the bill. Last year, I think they approved 150. I don't know how many or what amendments will be approved. We'll find that out as we go through the evening and tomorrow. But I know that we will have a good and healthy debate; and at the end of the day, the important thing that we must remember is that this committee's responsibility is to look out for the common defense of this Nation. We do so by supporting our troops, those who were on the battlefield and those who are stationed in various places around the world. We must see that they have everything they need to carry out their missions and to return home safely to their loved ones and that their loved ones that are left behind are given the things that they need, the support that they need to continue to support their loved ones who are out fighting for our freedoms.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the debate tomorrow. I encourage all the Members of our conference and our colleagues in the Congress to support this very important bill to help them carry out that important mission.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2012.

Hon. HOWARD ''BUCK'' MCKEON,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCKEON: I write to confirm our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. This legislation contains subject matter within the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Budget. However, in order to expedite floor consideration of this important legislation, the committee waives consideration of the bill.

The Budget Committee takes this action only with the understanding that the committee's jurisdictional interests over this and similar legislation are in no way diminished or altered.

The committee also reserves the right to seek appointment to any House-Senate conference on this legislation and requests your support if such a request is made. Finally, I would appreciate your including this letter in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 4310 on the House Floor. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

PAUL RYAN,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2012.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. I agree that the Committee on the Budget has valid jurisdictional claims to certain provisions in this important legislation, and I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting consideration of the bill. I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Committee on the Budget is not waiving its jurisdiction. Further, this exchange of letters will be included in the committee report on the bill.

Sincerely,

HOWARD P. ''BUCK'' MCKEON,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2012.

Hon. HOWARD ''BUCK'' MCKEON,
Chairman. Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCKEON: I am writing to you concerning the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Homeland Security in matters being considered in H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013.

Our committee recognizes the importance of H.R. 4310 and the need for the legislation to move expeditiously. Therefore, while we have a valid claim to jurisdiction over certain sections of the bill, I do not intend to request a sequential referral. This, of course, is conditional on our mutual understanding that nothing in this legislation or my decision to forego a sequential referral waives, reduces or otherwise affects the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security, and that a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest will be included in the Committee Report and as part of the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill by the House. I also ask that you support my request to name members of this committee to any conference committee that is named to consider such provisions.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

PETER T. KING,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2012.

Hon. PETER KING,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting consideration of the bill. I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Committee on Homeland Security is not waiving its jurisdiction. Further, this exchange of letters will be included in the committee report on the bill.

Sincerely,

HOWARD P. ''BUCK'' MCKEON,
Chairman.

□ 1930

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). All time for general debate has expired.

Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROSS of Florida) having assumed the chair, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, 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. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

AN ALL-OF-THE-ABOVE ENERGY STRATEGY

(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, President Obama has often claimed that we have 2 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, which is nothing but an excuse for inaction when developing American-made energy. As The Washington Post's fact-checkers noted, the President's claim is ''true, but false.'' False because ''proven oil reserves'' is only one category of oil, a fraction of the overall oil in the ground. ''Proven reserves'' refers to amounts of oil where seismic studies have identified available resources.

Due to the long Presidential and congressional bans on Outer Continental Shelf development, the inventory of resources has not been tracked in over 30 years. The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management estimate the U.S. has a 16 percent share of the world's undiscovered, technically recoverable, conventional oil resources. The Middle East also has a 16 percent share.

Rather than saying what we can't do, the President should be doing more to facilitate the safe discovery and development of U.S. resources.

Mr. Speaker, the President says he supports ''an all-of-the-above strategy for the 21st century that develops every source of American-made energy.'' The question now is whether he is willing to prove it.

DOMESTIC OIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I will be joined during this hour by my good friend and colleague from California, Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI.

I would like to just begin this discussion on oil prices by recalling that in 2008, the constant refrain that was heard in this Chamber over and over again was ''Drill, baby, drill'' by my colleagues on the Republican side. And the good news is that's precisely what we've done. In fact, in USA Today, Citigroup analysts are quoted as saying in a recent report, Energy independence ''is no pipe dream. The U.S. is already the world's fastest-growing oil and natural gas producer. Counting the output from Canada and Mexico, North America is 'the new Middle East.' ''

So it's interesting to note that as much as we've been wringing our hands, there is oil being produced here in the United States. In fact, a lot of oil is being produced in the United States. And we're going to go over a few charts now to show how, in fact, things are looking a little bit better.

This first chart really shows what happened with oil production. When George Bush was still the President of the United States, the price of gas hit $4.10 a gallon. It was very high. And then gas prices hit rock bottom when President Obama took office because of the global financial crisis that hit. When President Obama took office, there were fewer than 400 oil rigs operating in the United States, falling below 200 rigs by mid 2009. Then, despite safety reviews after the BP spill, oil rigs operating in the United States quadrupled over the next 3 years. There are now more than 1,300—I repeat that, 1,300—oil rigs operating in the United States, more than all operational oil drilling in the rest of the world combined.

So in the last 3 years of the Bush administration, we were producing 1.78 billion barrels of oil; but in the first 3

years of the Obama, we have already produced 2 billion barrels of oil. The U.S. oil production has continued to increase under President Obama and is now at an 8-year high.

Jim Burkhard, who is Cambridge Energy Research Associates managing director, said in Senate testimony in February of this year, ''A 'great revival' in U.S. oil production is taking shape.''

So for all the hand-wringing from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, talking about what isn't being done, the truth is a lot is being done, and we now have more oil rigs operating in the United States—some 1,300—than all the other places in the world combined.

BP projects that the U.S. will get 94 percent of its energy domestically by the year 2030. That's going to be a huge benefit for all of us. Economists at Citigroup argue that North America can be energy independent by 2020. That's only 8 years away. We could be energy independent by 2020. Citigroup says, if that happens, we will create 3.6 million new jobs, and we will see the unemployment rate cut by 2 percent.

An interesting example is that of North Dakota. Do you know what the unemployment rate is in North Dakota today? It's 3 percent. In California, it's 11 percent. In North Dakota, it's 3 percent. And North Dakota can now boast having the lowest unemployment rate in the country, and it is now the fourth-largest oil producer in the country as well.

So we create new jobs. We reignite manufacturing and chemical businesses. And guess what. American families see a lot of savings, too. In fact, the price of natural gas has dropped substantially. And if we keep going the way we're going, it will drop some 80 percent, giving the American family a $926 a year savings.

Georgia Power is another great example. Their fuel costs dropped 19 percent. And guess what. All of their utility customers saw a decrease in their electrical costs, in their utility bills, by some 6 percent. So there is some good news in all of that.

The second chart looks at U.S. oil production versus gas volatility. World market factors are really driving up oil prices. And if you look at this particular chart, you see that the oil production stays pretty much the same. It goes up a little bit in 2010, as you can see; but, for the most part, it stays pretty consistent. But what does change and changes dramatically up and down, as if you are reading an EKG, is the price of gas in this country. So gas prices are going up and down irrespective of the production of oil.

The Associated Press conducted an investigation over the past 36 years of U.S. oil production and gas prices and found that there is no statistical correlation between how much oil comes out of U.S. wells and the price at the pump. More U.S. drilling has not changed how deeply the gas pump drills into your wallet, and we know that.

□ 1940

The price of oil is determined on a global market. More oil production in the United States does not mean consistently lower prices at the pump. However, if we become less dependent on foreign oil, we will see some dramatic shifts take place in the country.

So why does more drilling have so little effect on gas prices? The answer is because oil is a global commodity. The United States owns less than 2 percent of the global reserves and pays the same world market price that everyone else does.

So, with that, let me introduce my good friend, Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI, from the great area of Sacramento and the Valley.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you very much, Congresswoman SPEIER, and thank you for bringing this very, very important issue to the attention of the American public this evening as we spend this hour talking about gas prices in the United States.

I was really struck by the charts that you put up. Wow. But they tell us that the story is we don't pump oil in America. Not so. We do. We really do. And they tell us that we're going in the wrong direction. But if you take a look at those charts, we're actually producing more and more energy. Today, in the Resources Committee, on which I have the honor of sitting, we had a debate about this. And our Republican colleagues were saying that we're not producing as much. And so we show them the energy institute's statistics, and they say they're wrong. That's an independent agency and they collect the statistics, and in fact they're right. And your charts clearly pointed out that we are in fact making it in America.

This is my favorite chart. This is what I'm often on the floor talking about: Manufacturing in America and making it in America. It's not often that we take this subject of making our energy in America, building an American energy machine, one that will supply the energy that our Nation needs to meet a growing economy and the needs of our society.

So very, very much what we're talking about here is making it in America. There are so many different pieces to this. I'm going to just bring up two of those, and then we'll carry on our dialogue here.

First of all, conservation. I think you're going to talk about this a little later—about automobile conservation, the gasoline in automobiles, which is very, very important, but there's so much other conservation that we must be doing in housing, in commercial buildings, in this building. This building is over 150 years old. We've got serious lack of energy conservation here within the Nation's Capitol.

But if we carry on a major effort on conservation, we will reduce our expenses and simultaneously make the available energy—the energy that is currently available—much more widely available and at a lower cost because of the market forces. So conservation is absolutely critical not only in oil and gas but in all of the other energy that we consume in this Nation.

Now the second thing, and then I'll circle back around quickly, is what I call substitution. We can substitute energy forms for oil, and in doing so, increase our domestic availability for oil—and that's diesel and gasoline. And in the substitution we also reduce our importation of oil. So substitution is really important.

So what is substitution? Well, substitution is going electric. We can go to electric cars, go to hybrids, which are a combination of electric and gasoline. There are many different ways on the transportation sector. But oil is also used in the production of electricity. Natural gas is the big thing today, and it is a wonderful substitution for coal. And we'll come back to that.

Finally, biofuels. The point I want to do here leads me to this little chart that I've used before, and it talks about where your tax money is going. Where is your tax money going? Well, I'll tell you that about $5 billion of your tax money every year goes to the oil industry. It goes to the oil industry to provide a subsidy that's now been in place for more than a century. And in doing so, it worked. That subsidy worked. It created one of the wealthiest—not one of—the wealthiest industry in the entire world. That's the oil industry. And, again, I know you're going to pick this up and carry it a little bit further.

But just here, our subsidies, our tax dollars handed over $5 billion a year to the Big Five, who earn billions and billions of dollars of profit every quarter. Why do we continue to do that when we really starve the substitutions?

You look at here, this is the biofuel area. This is the green technologies—wind, solar energy, biofuels. This is ethanol down here. You just compare this. The subsidies from $70 billion a year going to coal and oil, that's well beyond the Big Five. And over here on this side we're talking about some $12 billion. And down here, some $16 billion a year.

So what's happened is that your tax money continues to subsidize oil and coal and just a little teeny, tiny bit on the substitutions, where the opportunity for real energy independence will exist. So we should keep this in mind as we look at how we use your tax dollars.

Now there's a huge fight going on here in the Congress, appropriately so, about changing this substitution; that we ought to stop subsidizing the oil industry, put some of that money over here into the substitutes, that is the green technologies, and into paying off our deficit or taking care of our seniors and our sick. There's much, much more to be done on that.

I would love to see your charts and we'll get into this in some, hopefully, elegant way.

Ms. SPEIER. The next chart that we're going to put up is one that you'll find particularly interesting. This is the Big Five oil companies and how much money they made just in 2011. As can you see, $137 billion last year—a 75 percent increase in the profits over the year before. And as you can see each of them: ExxonMobil, 31 percent increase; Shell, a 54 percent increase; BP, 114 percent increase; Chevron, 42 percent increase; ConocoPhillips, 9 percent increase.

These companies are doing extraordinarily well and yet we're still giving them $5 billion in subsidies.

I guess the question I have for you, Congressman, is one of the things that we're told by the industry often enough is that if you take away our subsidies, the cost of gas at the pump is going to go up. And what is the answer to that question?

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, you have another chart there that showed the oil that is pumped and the price of gasoline. Congresswoman SPEIER, you used this before. And you asked me: If we take away the subsidies, will it increase the cost of gasoline? The answer is, categorically: No.

First of all, it is an international market that sets the price of gasoline. I should add one little caveat to that. International market and speculation. And I'm going to come to the speculation in a little bit.

Anyway, the international market sets the price of gasoline that these Big Five companies buy and the value of the oil that they extract. So the barrel of oil is set internationally. Now if it's set internationally and you take out the speculation, it remains fairly constant. Here's the production. And it has gone up, but it's been rather steady over this period of time.

The subsidy is to encourage the production of oil. Well, they've had the subsidy and so the production has been rocking along here. The price of oil is set internationally. What explains this enormous variation in the price of fuel at the pump? Well, it's not production. That's from here. Is it the subsidies? The subsidies are a very, very small part. You're looking at a $137 billion total profit. The subsidy is $5 billion. So it's inconceivable that the subsidy has much to do with the bottom line, other than adding $5 billion, which would be, I guess, if you took the subsidy out, it would be $132 billion. Oh, my, let's whine about that. I don't think so.

So the subsidy doesn't have much to do, if anything, with the price of gasoline. The price of gasoline, however, is set by those companies. And that leads directly to that bottom line there—this $137 billion. They choose to set that price.

Now what are we going to do about it? Well, take the subsidies back and begin to move away from dependence on oil, whether that's imported oil or oil that is pumped out of the ground here in the United States, and move to these alternatives.

□ 1950

Move to the alternatives, electricity and natural gas and the biofuels. All of those will further reduce the demand for oil which will bring down the cost of a barrel of oil within this country and around the world and, in so doing, allow us to have a lower gasoline price; and to do that, capture the subsidies. It's not going to increase the cost of a gallon of gasoline at all.

Ms. SPEIER. So we know that we're pumping more oil out of the ground in this country right now than ever before in our history, more than is being pumped anywhere else in the world—1,300 oil rigs. We know that we are still giving the industry a huge subsidy, and we know that they're making lots of money. Right? So what is going on? Is there, in fact, speculation? Is that driving the price of gas up?

Now, Bart Chilton, who is a Commodity Futures Trading Commission commissioner, recently said that consumers are now paying what amounts to a Wall Street premium every time they fill up their car with gas. In fact, he said every time you fill up your Honda Civic, you're paying a $7.50 Wall Street tax, in effect. You're paying that because of the speculation that's going on in the market. If your car is a Ford Explorer, you're actually paying an extra $10.41. So over the course of a year, it turns into real money. You're now talking about $700 more a year that we're paying because Wall Street speculation is driving this price.

Now, we've asked the Justice Department on three different occasions, the President of the United States has asked the Justice Department on three different occasions to look into, to investigate the speculators. And we're waiting. We're waiting for that particular review to take place because what we do know is that if we can get oil down to $70 a barrel, we're going to bring gas down to $3 a gallon, which will be a huge benefit to the consumers in this country.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The speculation issue, this morning we had a fellow from the Connecticut Petroleum Retailers Association come in and talk to us about speculation. You and I didn't have enough time to put this together, we talked about this beforehand, because we were both taken by the information he provided. It is really not new information, but it is very interestingly put on the issue of speculation. Forgive me, general public and forgive me, Ms. SPEIER, but I just decided to put this together on the back of this Make It in America chart because America was taken to the cleaners in 2008.

This is what happened to the price of a barrel of oil in 2008. Now keep in mind in 2008 the wars were going on, but there was no real change in the wars. In March of 2008, a barrel of oil cost $70 a barrel in the United States, and I guess worldwide also. So March of 2008, it was $70 a barrel. Nothing happened, no big change. The Straits of Hormuz were not shut down; Venezuela and Nigeria and other countries continued to pump oil, as they had before.

But between March of 2008 and July of 2008, what's that, 4 months, 5 months, the price went from $70 a barrel to $147 and gasoline was very close to $5 a gallon. So oil went from $70 to $147—doubled, doubled in price—in just a period of time from March, April, May, June until July of 2008. And then the speculators broke and the price plummeted between July to November to $32 a barrel.

Now this has nothing to do with the production of oil around the world. It has nothing to do with major international crises of any kind. Obviously, we had a problem in the United States with our economy; but the consumption of gasoline remained about the same, but the price of a barrel of oil doubled and then in the same year, July to November, plummeted to $32 a barrel.

If there is ever, ever a situation that says somebody is speculating in this market, it's this extraordinary change that occurred over a period of time from March to July to November. And there's no supply and demand, no international crisis that could even begin to explain this extraordinary shift in prices. It is, I think, beyond a doubt that all of this, this was the great gasoline crisis of 2008, was caused by speculation. Now, we need to do something about that.

Here is an issue before the House of Representatives, and every day somewhere in the buildings here in Washington there are a group of Republicans that are doing their level best to eliminate the one law that we have been able to put in place to control speculation. This is the Dodd-Frank legislation. The Dodd-Frank legislation has very powerful tools to control speculation. And you can draw your own conclusions why our Republican friends would try to torpedo, to end, to eviscerate the Dodd-Frank legislation so that the speculators can continue this kind of activity.

Now, keep in mind that this is not ending. If we go to 2010, 2011, the current period, my guess is that we would see something similar to this kind of speculation. So the Dodd-Frank legislation is the only tool we have available today to deal with speculations such as occurred in 2008 and is in all likelihood continuing today.

Ms. SPEIER. An interesting point along the same lines, maybe 4 or 5 years ago, the percentage of speculation in the oil market was 30 percent. The speculators were involved in about 30 percent. About 70 percent were end-users that were in the market. But interestingly enough today, those numbers have just flipped so that the end-

users of gas, of gasoline, that are betting on the future are 30 percent, and it's the speculators that are 70 percent.

The other thing that the experts said this morning, I don't know if you were there at the time, they were talking about Katrina. When Katrina hit, it blew out all of those oil rigs in the gulf. It shut down oil production for a period of time. And you know what happened to the price of oil? It went from $50 a barrel to $60 a barrel for about 4 months, not from $70 a barrel to $147 a barrel. So over 4 months, it went up ever so slightly, but significantly nonetheless; and then it came down.

So this, this is ripe for an investigation, I believe, because it would suggest that there is a lot of speculation going on in the market today.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I was there for that, and I was struck by the very same statistic. As you look at what happened then, $10 here, a doubling in price. Consider for a moment what it would mean to somebody that had purchased back here in March a million barrels of oil at $70 a barrel, and they come up to July, that million barrels of oil has doubled in value. So this is why speculation occurs. It occurs because somebody by playing the market, by speculating, is able to make a vast sum of money.

There's the other side of that coin—somebody lost a vast sum of money coming down here. But the American public, however, was the single biggest loser in all of this because as that went up, the price at the pump also went up, and Americans paid more and more for the price of gasoline. It was about $5 a gallon when it came up here. And it didn't go down from $147 to $32; that proportion didn't happen. It did drop from near $5 down to $3.50, in that area.

So the American public was stuck with an exceedingly high price which continues to this day, which leads to those extraordinary profits which you were showing just a few minutes ago. Now, I'm not saying the oil industry was involved in the speculation; but I will say this, the oil industry benefited from the speculation that left a very high price for oil into the future. This didn't last very long. This went back up to $70, and today it's over $100 a barrel.

So we need to consider all of these things about what's going on in the oil market. The bottom line of this is we need to change. And this is, I think, where you want to go. You want to talk about conservation. You're the leader here, take us where you want and I'll follow.

Ms. SPEIER. So let's talk about what the solution is to protect Americans from volatile gas prices and to kick our dependence on foreign oil. That becomes the secret.

□ 2000

I mean, by every focus, if we kick our dependence on foreign oil, we are going to be so much better off.

So let's look at this next chart. In 2005, America's dependence on foreign oil peaked at about 60 percent. Then it dropped down in 2010 to 49 percent. Then last year, it dropped down even more to 45 percent. 2010 marked the first time U.S. dependence on foreign oil fell below 50 percent in 13 years, and our dependence on foreign oil is now at the lowest level in 16 years. At this rate, the Energy Information Administration predicts that the U.S. will slash its dependence on foreign oil to as low as 36 percent in the year 2035.

The U.S. transportation sector consumed nearly 5 billion barrels of petroleum in 2009, accounting for over 70 percent of the consumption in the United States. The lion's share of that—45 percent of total consumption—was in passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks.

So, what do we do about that gas guzzling that's going on? Well, the thing we do about that is to look at how we can change how many miles to the gallon we get. To the President's credit, his administration has put in place these new corporate average fuel economy standards—known to all of us as CAFE standards—that will nearly double the efficiency of the U.S. fleet of automobiles, achieving a fleet-wide average of 54.5 miles per gallon by the year 2025.

So what does that do once we get there at 2025? Well, it means that we, as consumers, will save $1.7 trillion at the pump over the life of the program. A family that purchases a new vehicle in 2025 will save $8,200 in fuel costs when compared with a similar vehicle in 2010. So over the life of the program, the standard will save 12 billion barrels of oil and eliminate 6 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide pollution.

So the solutions are really there for us. The solutions are that we move to these CAFE standards, that we address the issues around speculation, and that we keep the robust drilling that is going on in this country right now so that we can continue to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, I took a look at that before we began this hour, and I go, Oh, my, do I have to wait until 2025 to buy that vehicle? No, not really. There are pure electric vehicles that are available today that get not 54 miles per gallon but like infinite, by using electricity only. You can buy those. Unfortunately for me, in my district where a Saturday run around the district is 600 miles, it doesn't make much sense yet, but it's coming.

The battery technology is improving for automobiles. You can store that energy or take down that energy at night. This is part of the electric grid and the changes that are occurring in the electric grid all across this Nation. Given the low price of natural gas today—just over $2 per 1,000 Btus—we're seeing the electric utility industry shifting from coal to natural gas. As they do that shift, we get an enormous reduction in the carbon emissions—which is good for the environment and good for the climate change issue—and, simultaneously, we're able to then see a path to an electric vehicle, or at least a hybrid plug-in, hybrid electric vehicle. All very, very good. Biofuels will be part of that also.

So it's very, very powerful that we continue to increase. And let's keep in mind that there had been no increase until the Obama administration came in. I think it was over 20 years that the standards had been in place, and then President Obama came in and said, Listen, we need to move to conservation. And the result is the incredible savings.

I don't want to wait until 2025. Let's do something about it today.

Ms. SPEIER. Well, we can certainly try to encourage it.

I don't know if you have any more thoughts.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I have a couple more things that I'll pick up along the way. Let me just share one of them, since we're on the gasoline issue.

You and I go back to our district every weekend. A month ago, 2 months ago, the rage was the price of gasoline. I was doing town halls. I knew you were also, and so I was doing some research about where the gasoline is and what it's being used for and what the cost was.

I came across a statistic from the Energy Information Institute that was absolutely surprising to me. The talk on the radio and on television and the talk radio and talk television was that we have this enormous shortage of gasoline, that the threat of a war in Iran was responsible for driving it up, and somehow problems in Nigeria or Venezuela—or wherever—were somehow shorting the market and that gasoline was in short supply. But the information, the statistics were exactly the opposite. There was a glut of gasoline in the United States, so much so—get this—so much so that the oil industry—Chevron, Exxon, BP, all of the rest—were exporting 28 million gallons of gasoline a day. At the same time they were exporting, they were driving the price up towards $5 a gallon.

And we go, wait a minute. What's this all about? You're telling me we have a shortage? If we have a shortage, why are you exporting 28 million gallons of gasoline a day? And from the information I've been able to obtain, it appears as though that export continues to this day—an export of 28 million gallons of gasoline a day out of the United States at the same time that the industry is saying, Oh, woe is us. We have a short supply. Well, if it's short supply, it's because they are creating it to the deficit and to the harm of the American traveling public who has to buy that gasoline.

Now, one other thing—and check me on this; I was trying to recall all of the information this morning—that in the last quarter of 2011 and the first quarter of this year, the United States, for the first time in—help me here, 40 years?

Ms. SPEIER. Sixty years.

Mr. GARAMENDI. —60 years was a net exporter of oil, a net exporter. We had achieved energy independence. We were exporting more than we were importing for the last quarter of last year and the first quarter of this year. I don't know if that's going to continue, but it flies right in the face of what the oil industry was telling us as the fake, false crisis of the spring occurred. My guess is it was speculation. My guess is it was greed on the part of the oil industry.

My solution is to end the subsidies, bring that money back and use it on the green technologies and conservation. My solution is to enforce the Dodd-Frank laws and to make certain speculators are not robbing the American people day in and day out. Those are two things we can do. And as you said earlier, we will continue to produce energy in the United States, and we'll Make It In America.

I thank you so very much. I do have another meeting. I'm going to have to run, but this is good. It's good to get the information out there. Thank you for bringing us together tonight.

Ms. SPEIER. Well, thank you, Congressman, for your great presentation and your passion around making it in America, which should be underscored, because one of the great things that happens in my district is a lot of innovation.

Tesla, which is an electric car company that is making it in America, building it right there in Fremont, has a showroom right outside my district. And a gentleman came in to test-drive the sports—the Roadster, which has a hefty price associated with it, but very fast.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Is this the one that goes a gazillion miles an hour in 5 seconds?

Ms. SPEIER. Yes. It goes very fast, and it's all electric.

So he took it for a little spin, came back and said, I want to buy it. The salesperson says, Well, you're the first person who has ever come in here and literally bought it after just a test-drive. The purchaser said, Well, my neighbor on one side and my neighbor on the other side have already bought one.

Now, the funny thing about that story is not the keeping up with the Joneses so much, but the fact that in terms of the grid, having three electric cars on the same block charging overnight is going to create a little indigestion. So that's one of the good problems that we're going to get as more people are driving electric cars.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I was going to head out the door, but your Tesla story caught me as I was about to leave.

The grid, we need to have a smart grid. This is one of the things that is in contention here. This is about energy research. Now, we need to understand, how can we make that grid smart enough and robust enough that we will be able to charge, on any given block, one, two, three, four, five, or six more homes at night?

□ 2010

To do that, we need to have research and understanding, not only on how we produce the energy in an environmentally sound way that reduces the carbon emissions, but we also need to know how to distribute that power and when it's going to be needed. That's called the smart grid.

Now, to do that requires research. It requires us to invest in research to understand how the grid works, how it can be improved, how we can create the efficiency in the grid, how that power can be distributed to where it is needed when it is needed. That takes money. The Federal Government has, over the last several years, provided that research money in the budget that we're debating here now. Well, we're not debating it. It actually passed.

The blueprint for the current budget from this House reduces the energy research in the United States. So it may be some time, if our Republican colleagues have their way about the energy research, before those three people will be able to plug that thing in at the same time at night.

Ms. SPEIER. Well, let's hope we do it sooner than later so that they can be driving their Tesla Roadsters.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you so very much.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you. And I think at this point we have covered all of the issues we wanted to cover during this Special Order tonight. And I just want to leave my colleagues with this message. Again, this was quoted in USA Today. Citigroup analysts declared in a recent report, energy independence in the United States is not a pipe dream. The U.S. is already the world's fastest growing oil and natural gas producer. Counting the output of Canada and Mexico, North America is the new Middle East.

We've got many exciting things happening in the oil and gas industry.

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

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHARLES COLSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUNYAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HULTGREN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of my special order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, it is with mixed feelings that I come to this body tonight and will have many of my colleagues joining me over the next hour to remember someone who has had a huge impact, not only on this city and on this Nation, but on our world, a gentleman who had a very personal impact on my life, who passed away on April 21, 2012, Charles W. Colson.

Chuck Colson, as many of us knew him, was a very intelligent man, a very well-spoken man, a passionate man who served people, who looked for ways to honor them, recognizing the value of every single person. His life dramatically changed through a circumstance that he went through by going to prison. And I'm going to pull out some information here.

We were honored to have a service today, a memorial service at the National Cathedral that was a memorial and remembrance of Charles Colson's life. Charles Colson was born on October 16, 1931, in Boston, Massachusetts. He graduated from Brown University. He served in the Marine Corps, went to law school at Brown, and then went on to practice law.

At a very young age, in 1969, while he was under 40, he was selected by President Nixon to be Special Counsel to the President, and served directly under the President from 1969 until 1973. During that time, he was known as a very tough guy. He was known as Richard Nixon's hatchet man, and was very intelligent, understood policy, understood politics, understood how to get things done, very driven, very focused, very tough. So he used his Marine Corps background, his tough upbringing in Boston, and his sharp intellect to be a huge impact for President Nixon.

Well, he was also, in that time, involved peripherally with Watergate, and through that, he felt that he was called to be honest with his involvement in there and pled guilty and entered a plea of obstruction of justice and was sentenced to serve time in prison. And it was really as he was preparing for that time in prison that he started to examine his own life and to see what he had done, why he had done it, and what life was all about.

It was really through a writer that he had read, a book that had been given to him, a book by a great author and great thinker, C. S. Lewis, ''Mere Christianity.'' And through that book, and through the testimony of one of Chuck's good friends, that Chuck Colson came to see his own failings, his own sin, his need for a Savior and his need for a change. And it was really in the friend's driveway, as they were talking, that he heard his friend's testimony of what Jesus Christ had meant to his friend, and the floodgates just opened up.

All of a sudden Chuck Colson understood what the fact of his need for a Savior, the fact that he needed to turn his life around, that he was going to have to pay a heavy price for his involvement in Watergate, that he was

going to have to leave his friends and family, his young children, his wife, to go to prison for a long period of time. He wasn't even sure how long it was going to be. But it was that night, in that driveway that he gave his life to Christ. And from that time on, before he entered prison in the early seventies, through his death here in 2012, Chuck Colson was an incredibly faithful servant of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

But more than that, he also was a servant to the least among us. He never forgot that service, that time in prison, while he was there, and seeing the conditions that prisoners suffer under, the fact that we are all of incredible value, not because of what we've done, not because of what we know, not because of how much money we can earn, but because of how we have been created and the sacrifice that has been given for each and every one of us. He saw that, and he never forgot that.

So through this time we're going to talk about much of his life since that time of going to prison and coming out of prison. As he came out of prison he had opportunities where he could have gone immediately back into the private sector after being one of the chief people in the White House. He certainly had many connections, could have had a seven-figure income coming out of prison, but he decided not to do that.

Instead, he decided to start a ministry to fellow inmates. And it was from that start that literally, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of inmates, millions of inmates around the world, have been impacted by the ministry of Chuck Colson and Prison Fellowship Ministries, and many, many other ministries that have come out of that.

Angel Tree is another one that I'll talk about a little later on, of serving the victims of crime that we don't talk about very often, and that's children of inmates, unintended victims. Angel Tree is a service, a ministry that provides gifts to kids whose parents are in prison, a wonderful ministry that's provided gifts to millions of young children around the world.

I am so honored tonight to be able to recognize, to honor, to talk briefly and to share this time with some good friends of mine and to be able to talk about someone who had a huge impact on my life, Chuck Colson. I am going to hand it over to my friend STEVE PEARCE in a few minutes here.

But very personally, let me talk about the impact and my connection. I had known about Chuck Colson for the last 25 years or so, 30 years, through many of his books. He's written well over 25 books. He's been a speaker around the world. He had a weekly radio show called BreakPoint that would talk about issues that were going on in the world and, really, a Christian world view to addressing issues that we were facing here.

But throughout all of his books, all of his speaking, all of his literature, every time that he was talking, it was a connection that he cared for people. He loved people.

One of my favorite stories that I hear over and over and over again about Chuck Colson is, as he would travel around the world and travel into the worst of the worst prisons, that he would go in there and meet with prisoners. Oftentimes the warden wouldn't even go into some of these areas and meet with prisoners. The wardens of these prisons would be afraid. And yet Chuck Colson would go in, unarmed, without guards right with him, but would go up and meet with the prisoners, talk with them, touch them, hug them, and just interact with them and let them know that he was going to continue to be thinking about them, praying for them, caring for them, loving them, and that he would be back. That made a huge impact on my life.

Reading many of his books, he often talked about what is our role in government, and how should we view the challenges sometimes that we see? As Christians, how should we be involved in government?

□ 2020

He talked very clearly about that—of the respect of government but also of the importance of everybody from all faiths to be involved in government—and to recognize that this is our responsibility as citizens to be engaged and involved in the political process. So I had learned much about Chuck Colson through his readings, through hearing him speak.

I had a wonderful opportunity a couple of years ago when I had heard about a program that he did, that he had started up about 10 years ago, called the Centurions Program. What this is is a program that Chuck Colson and Prison Fellowship Ministries puts on. It's a yearlong program of study—of seminars, of training—of really talking about how to be involved in our country, to be involved in our government, to make an impact in our communities. It involved dozens of books that we read in a year: going through what impacts our culture, looking at movies, looking at music, looking at government, looking at education—every single sector.

Then we would come from all over the country out to Washington, D.C., three times during that year, to spend a long weekend together. Chuck Colson personally led those seminars, along with wonderful speakers from around the country who had come to train men and women from all over the Nation to be more effective in their communities, to be more effective in their families, to be passionate about using their gifts to impact others for good.

I was privileged to be selected to be a part of this Centurions Program in 2009, and I went through that yearlong process. Little did I know at that time, honestly, that I would have the opportunity to serve in Congress. This was before I even considered the idea of running for Congress, but it was really through that program and through much that I had learned that I was brought to start thinking about this, to pray about it, to talk to my wife, to talk to my family, to talk to my kids of how important this is and what a pivotal time in our Nation this is right now. So it was much through the impact that Chuck Colson had on my life and that the ministry had on my life that I decided to run for Congress.

I was so excited to have Chuck Colson here in the Cannon Caucus Room just several months ago to be able to meet with Members of Congress and to make the connection again. I had spent so much time with him in that year but hadn't had a chance to really connect with him since I had been elected to Congress. He came up to me and gave me a big hug and said, I am so proud of you. He wrote me a little note just saying, again, of how excited he was and how he wanted me to continue to be faithful in all that we had been studying together and learning together. He continued to challenge me, and we talked about how we were, hopefully, going to work together for many years to come.

Unfortunately, there was his untimely death. It was a very sudden death. He was speaking before a group of people and had a dizzy attack. Within a short period of time, he had a blood clot in his brain, which had an impact there. Over weeks, they tried to do everything that they could to save him and weren't able to. Unfortunately, we won't be able to continue to work with him, but his legacy lives on in me and in so many others, in literally millions of others around the world whom he touched. So that is why it is such a privilege for us to be able to honor him tonight as to the direct impact that he had on us.

Really, before I had the chance to get to know him more personally, part of the impact that he had was on the studies that I was doing when I was involved in our State legislature back in Illinois. My wife and I had had our fourth child, and we were trying to think of a good name for our new son. We decided together that we would name him Koleson. We call him Kole, but his name is Koleson, named after Chuck Colson. So it is such a privilege and a reminder all the time as I'm now with my 8-year-old little boy, Koleson, of the legacy that he has, of the big shoes that he has to fill and, really, of the power that his name means to me of a man who had a huge impact on my life.

So, again, we will take this time over these next minutes to honor a man we could spend days talking about. I am so privileged to have my colleagues here tonight, and I am going to turn it over to my good friend from New Mexico, STEVAN PEARCE.

Mr. PEARCE. I thank the gentleman for bringing this issue before the House.

It is rare that a person can impact your life in a very strong way. It is almost never that a person can impact your life in a very strong way on different ends of the spectrum.

In 1970, I graduated from college. I had drawn a very low draft number earlier in my college career. I had joined the Air Force ROTC in order to avoid going to Vietnam in the middle of my college career; but, as an ROTC graduate, I then had an obligation to go to pilot training. I attended pilot training and then went overseas. I was assigned to the C–130s. We were stationed at Clark Air Base in the Philippines, but most of our missions were in Vietnam. For the next year and a half, that's where I was.

On one particular mission there in that time of 1971 and 1972, I was a copilot who was flying into Cambodia. Now, at that time, we were supposedly not going into Cambodia, and we were supposedly not going into Laos, but we were in and out on several trips that day. That evening, when I got back to the BOQ, to the quarters there at Korat Air Force Base, which I think is where we were stationed at that time for 2 weeks, I was interested to see that President Nixon was on TV. The camera zoomed in very close to him, and he described that American soldiers were not in or around Cambodia, that that mission was not one that we as soldiers were fulfilling.

Now, having just been in and out around Cambodia the entire day, that struck me as unusual that a President would say things that were completely untrue, that I knew to be untrue. In my heart, I began to believe that he could have said, I don't think the American people have a right to know. He could have said, It's secret, and that's classified information. But he came out with the camera looking him square in the face, and he said that we were not there. Now, maybe he did not know. I'll give him that.

Yet, when I got back to the U.S. and had found out about Watergate—that was beginning to unravel—the idea of who to vote for in those 1972 elections was ever present on my mind. His opponent, there was no chance I would vote for him. His opponent was Eugene McCarthy. I would not vote for him, but I ended up filling my ballot out that neither man was qualified or deserved this office. I did not vote for a President that year simply because of my personal experience. Then in watching this whole problem with Watergate, Chuck Colson, Haldeman, those guys who were inside—the Plumbers—it began to give me a sense that this was a very bad point in my life and that Mr. Colson was a part of that group that was willing to mislead a Nation, that was willing to say things that weren't true. At the end of the day, President Nixon, as you know, stepped down. He gave up his office because of misdeeds that a small group of them pulled together.

Now, it was with that background that I knew Chuck Colson for most of my life. Then in 2003, when I arrived here at the Capitol when being first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, I started going to just a very small lecture series, and it was hosted by a gentleman named Chuck Colson. It didn't take long to make the association; but he was bringing in some of the best Christian worldview thinkers in the entire country, and I was able to experience Mr. Colson in a far different way than that remote acquaintance I had made in the early seventies.

In this way, he was one of the most compelling thinkers in the country. It was he who said that he lived in the dark until he saw the light. It was he who committed himself to a different view of the world, one that said that we must have redemption, that we must have a savior, that there is no hope for us as human beings if we are not to deal with those problems that each one of us faces in our lives. As he began to develop his insights and began to be one of the premier organizers of the Christian worldview, bringing in literally people from around him, he established his pillars for glorifying God through the works that we do.

Those pillars are: One, prepare well; two, keep an eye on the horizon rather than up close to you; three, engage and enlist others; four, run assessments; five, seek the abiding fruit, not just that that is temporary; and, finally, have guidelines that you have applied.

It is in those principles of glorifying God that Mr. Colson really developed a presence that affected the world and affected my life significantly. He began to compel those of us attending this lecture series in this House of Representatives, in one of the rooms beneath us, to enlist those around us, to be a light that shines out to others, to let our lives be different, to let our lives be the equivalent of salt and light, which are rubbed, so to speak, into the fabric of the American mindset so that those around us will know that they have embraced a lie.

□ 2030

It was Mr. Colson who told me the most dramatic thing. His perception was—and I believe it is still—''The greatest problem facing America,'' he said, ''is truth.'' We don't know the truth in this country anymore. It's not revered. As we don't know the truth, then we see the fragments of society beginning to come loose around us.

I hear my own daughter and grandchildren say: Which side is right? They're all saying different things. When we as a Nation walk away from the concept of truth, when we as elected officials fail to honor our obligations to speak the truth as we know it, when our courts declare that there is no truth, then the Nation truly does suffer.

He made that extraordinarily clear and lived it in his life. It's at that point that I began to be compelled that I should be more honest and transparent in my own faith. Not that I would go out and be interrupting people and thrusting myself into their consciousness, but that they would look and see there's something different. They would say: Maybe we can trust that viewpoint.

So it is with sincere appreciation to my friend who is honoring Chuck Colson with this time tonight—because I believe that the Nation has lost one of the premier thinkers, one of the premier people who would guide us along a path, who would give us a wake-up call saying that we must find that salvation, we must find that way back when things have gone wrong. He was speaking from his experience of having gone so desperately wrong at a young age, being upheld and lifted into the very White House in this country, and having stumbled so badly.

He could speak with experience saying we all have to come back. There are things that every single one of us slip into that eventually we're going to want to change course. It's through his example, through his words, through his values, through his ideas that I know there are many here in this Congress who have lived a different life because of those ideas.

He came to New Mexico a couple of years ago. They had a large conference on the weekend. Again, I remember the same clarity, the same professionalism, the same looking toward the horizon there at that conference in New Mexico as we heard in this building here. He was a constant. He was refreshing to speak so openly about his problems. He was never able to let them loose, never get them away from him, never get that stain off of him. But he embraced that, yes. That's who he was and now he was different, that he had lived in the dark until he had seen the light.

Each one of us, if we were to make those same understandings and give those same acknowledgements, I believe, would live better and more transparent lives with truth being a greater part of that life. And I think the Nation would be better off for us living, as it is for him having lived.

We mourn his passing, but we also glorify God that he was placed into our midst that he might truly shine the light of truth into the darkness that he found around him.

My friend, I will stay around to hear what else we have. Thank you very much.

Mr. HULTGREN. I want to thank my colleague from New Mexico. I thank you so much.

Now I want to yield to my good friend from North Carolina, MIKE MCINTYRE.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, I share with these dear friends today marking the passing into glory of Mr. Charles Chuck Colson. We new Chuck as a dear friend and Christian brother, author, radio commentator, and also one who challenged us all to think more about our world view.

With his passing, our Nation has lost an uncommon leader, a true example of

the transformative power of Jesus Christ, and a reminder of the beauty of second chances in life. While some will forever remember Mr. Colson for his role in the Watergate scandal, I will remember and honor him for the grace and perseverance with which he advocated for the least of these in our society: those that were marginalized, those who were seen as helpless.

With his work through Prison Fellowship, the world's largest organization for outreach to prisoners and former prisoners and prisoners' families, and through his inspirational books and commentaries, Chuck Colson touched thousands of lives and advocated tirelessly for programs that would not only address the physical needs of those in our Nation's prisons, but also their spiritual needs, as well.

In addition, Mr. Colson's daily radio show ''BreakPoint,'' during which he would share a commentary on the life of Christ and also on the Christian world view on the issues of the day, was such a challenge and an inspiration to me that as a young lawyer in southeastern North Carolina, in my hometown of Lumberton, I actually put copies of his ''BreakPoint'' commentaries out on the coffee table so that those clients and prospective clients who came to our law office would take time to hear from this lawyer, Chuck Colson, whose life had been so transformed by the experiences he had gone through.

When I think about his insights, it's because they were so challenging and so clear in their wisdom that they were so touching. His books challenge you to think deeply about your own calling in life: What was God calling you to do, and how could you take even the worst of experiences? I remember him describing looking out on the south lawn of the White House thinking he was just one door down from the President and the neatly manicured lawn. I remember Chuck two or three times in different testimonies describing that experience and thinking, You know, I've made it.

But then Chuck Colson went from the White House to the very depths of understanding what it meant to be in prison. But instead of letting that ruin his life after the Watergate scandal, he came out of that with his life being changed. His great book, ''Born Again,'' was a bestseller back in the 1970s when I was in college. And I still remember when my own father, who passed into glory last year, read that book. Along with other experiences that happened to my own father, that book, ''Born Again,'' told a story that my dad could identify with and that helped to change his life.

Having heard Chuck Colson speak at Montreat, where my own dad made his own Christian commitment, and hearing Chuck Colson speak at other events with the late Dr. D. James Kennedy down at Coral Ridge Ministries down in Florida, and being with Chuck so many times here on Capitol Hill, being part of the lecture series that my good friend mentioned just a moment ago—that I still remember he organized here on Capitol Hill and would invite Members of Congress to come and to think more deeply and challenge us to go beyond the politics of the issue.

Then in his monthly newsletter called ''Jubilee,'' he would have an editorial at the back that I regularly read and made sure that often I ripped that out and put it in a file because his thoughts were so provocative and challenging in terms of our own world view.

I also had the opportunity to get to know Chuck Colson and count him as a brother in Christ and as a friend, participating not only in the lecture classes here on Capitol Hill, but when he rewrote the book that he had written in 1982, ''Kingdoms in Conflict,'' which greatly touched my life as I thought about the possibility of one day maybe coming to this place. He rewrote that book on ''God and Politics,'' and challenged us to think about where we are in our faith as we deal with the tough times in the political world, so much so that my wife, Dee, asked me if for our 25th wedding anniversary that instead of a gift or going on a trip, could we be in the Centurion Program that Chuck Colson had where he had 100 citizens from around this Nation participate and spend an entire year studying the Christian world view on issues ranging from health care to business, from medicine to education, from law and government to issues within religion itself, and challenging us to study the biblical perspective and the Christian world view, and to think how we deal with those issues as Christians in the everyday world.

□ 2040

So with those 100 citizens from across the country, my wife and I spent a year studying under Chuck Colson's guidance and went to three different seminars that he hosted not too far from here in Washington. What an inspiration this man was because he didn't just teach and he didn't just talk, but he walked the walk and he changed lives by God's power in the process.

I know some of you here with us today—so often, we shared the night before the National Prayer Breakfast. Before we came and led the spiritual heritage tours here at the Capitol that so many hundreds of people have now done over the years, that we made it a regular habit to go to Chuck Colson's annual Prison Fellowship dinner that he had on the Wednesday night before the Thursday National Prayer Breakfast in February. And we looked forward as much to that as being central to the celebration of what the National Prayer Breakfast was all about because we knew the night before, Chuck Colson was having his annual dinner, usually honoring some great religious leader or reformer in society before we had our spiritual heritage tour back here at the Capitol.

He often also talked about his experience as a United States Marine at Camp LeJeune, just on the edge of my congressional district. And he also talked about the practical ways that faith can change your life. That's the great legacy I know Chuck Colson would be pleased with today. We're talking about a man not only who was a great author and speaker but a man whose life changed lives and made a difference.

Thank you very much.

Mr. HULTGREN. I want to thank my good friend and fellow Centurion. Thank you so much, MIKE. I appreciate you being here.

I yield to my other good friend, ROBERT ADERHOLT from Alabama.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening, along with my colleagues, to honor the life and legacy of Charles Colson, better known as Chuck Colson.

Many people remember Chuck Colson as the hatchet man for President Richard M. Nixon and also the first member of the administration under Richard Nixon to go to prison.

But Chuck Colson is probably known better as a central figure in the Christian community since his conversion to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Some at the time of his conversion may have said it was a jailhouse conversion. However, if you knew and you looked at the life of Chuck Colson and saw the life that he led following his release from Maxwell Federal Prison Camp in Alabama, you would come to a far different conclusion.

Chuck Colson emerged from prison with a new mission, and that mission was to mobilize the Christian Church to minister to prisoners. This would perhaps be his greatest contribution to the church and to the world.

Chuck Colson was someone who rose to high places in the eyes of the world during his time here in Washington and in his political career. But it actually wasn't until Chuck Colson hit rock bottom that really his life was turned around. It wasn't until he realized that he was living in darkness, that he was in need of a savior, and that he was powerless to earn God's favor that his life actually turned around.

If he were here with us tonight, I think Chuck would unashamedly say that placing his trust in Christ, recognizing that Christ had paid the penalty for his sins was the best decision that he ever made in his life. And I can say these things about Chuck Colson because I had the opportunity to get to know Chuck Colson personally over the last several years, and I am honored to call him a friend.

Chuck Colson made many friends over his life and, of course, he will be missed greatly by so many around the world. And of course to Patty and his children, he will be sorely missed.

But, Mr. Speaker, I feel sure that Chuck has heard the words, Well done, my good and faithful servant.

So I thank you again, Mr. HULTGREN, for the time you have yielded to me to honor Chuck Colson.

Mr. HULTGREN. Thank you, Mr. ADERHOLT.

Now it's my privilege to recognize a good friend from Iowa, Congressman STEVE KING.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to also offer my most appreciative words for the life and the gift to all of us that was the life of Chuck Colson.

A lot of us got to know Chuck Colson as he came before our conference on occasion, the Republican Study Committee on occasion and professed his conversion. And when one listened to Chuck Colson talk about how his conversion took place, how he hit rock bottom, as the gentleman from Alabama just said, how he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior, and accepted a new direction in life that had lasted for 40 years, a man that was at the pinnacle of power in the world found himself in prison for about 8 months in Alabama.

And out of that prison, he came back and hit bottom and was launched not at the pinnacle of this world power, but he was at the center of the voice of the real power in the universe. And his inner voice, the spirit within Chuck Colson, spoke to all of us.

Upon learning of his death, I sent out a tweet in those days, and it read like this:

Chuck Colson, from Watergate to evangelical Christian to Prison Fellowship to heaven in 80 years. Rest in peace, Chuck. How now shall we live?

How now shall we live, Chuck Colson, who lived by the model that he had. It was a blessing to all of us that he went through the difficulty that he did. If he hadn't been formed and shaped in that way, I don't know that we would have seen the Chuck Colson that we knew that we're saying good-bye to here tonight whose life we honor so much.

His activities in Prison Fellowship set a standard that had not been seen in this country or in the world. And the recidivism rate of prisoners that didn't take part in the Prison Fellowship was extremely high. I haven't committed that number to my memory; but it seems to me that those who went through the Prison Fellowship, those who accepted Jesus as their savior—and I have met with them in the prisons in Iowa that were part of the Prison Fellowship effort—the recidivism rate—by memory, not by research—was only 8 percent.

It was a tremendous thing to mentor so many prisoners in and out of prison and the families of prisoners. He went to the place where he had known despair and gave hope in the very heart of the place where Chuck Colson had known despair. And I think that the testing of Chuck Colson turned him into a man that was a gift to this country and a gift to the entire world.

I remember a prayer that I offered for years and years throughout the farm crisis, the years of the eighties, the difficulties in the nineties. And it was:

Lord, please be finished testing me and start to use me.

I don't know if Chuck Colson ever offered that prayer, but I think he would agree with me that there was a time that he was tested; there was a time that he went through that test in the pinnacle of power and through that test in prison, and there's no question that the Lord used Chuck Colson, tested him for 40 years, used him for 40 years. Chuck Colson was a gift to America and a gift to the world.

I saw a little quote in an article written about him that I thought was useful and informative: The light just emanated from Chuck Colson. You knew that he understood. He wrote eloquently about the depth of his faith and the meaning in our lives in this life and in the next and the power of redemption. And this quote was written about him. I will note the author because it's useful.

The author is Michael Gerson, who wrote an article about him on April 22. He said, Chuck spent the last 40 years of his life dazzled by his own implausible redemption. He knew it was a gift. It was implausible that a person as humble as Chuck Colson could be the recipient of this gift of grace, yet that gift shined from him like a lamp on a lamp stand, not under a bushel basket. It was a light that shined across this whole country, and it shone into this United States Congress over and over again. He was a core for the values of our faith. He was a core for the values of our morality. He brought our thoughts together on the meaning of our service, our service here in this Congress and our service to the world.

And I think he gave hope to many in despair, many of those that served their time in prison or had been given hope and inspiration, grace and salvation because of their exposure to Chuck Colson, the inspiration that he was. His life dazzles by his own redemption. We are dazzled by the life of Chuck Colson.

□ 2050

Mr. HULTGREN. I want to thank my colleague from Iowa.

It's now my privilege to yield to my good friend from Texas, LOUIE GOHMERT.

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate my friend yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it's such an honor to pay tribute to such a great man as Chuck Colson. I first read about Chuck Colson, of course, after the Watergate event occurred and all of the events surrounding it. And then I was in law school when I read his book, ''Born Again.'' It sounded like this was a brilliant man who really and truly had had a conversion experience. Life had been materially changed. Then, again, there are those who as a judge I saw that would get in trouble and grab a Bible and say, I'm changed, so go easy on me. Things like that. But this really appeared quite genuine with Chuck Colson. And I knew, as the Bible teaches, we'll be known by our fruits. What incredible fruits this man produced. Amazing.

So over the years I stayed in touch. He didn't know me personally during those years, but I listened to cassettes of his sermons, his lectures. That tells you how far back it goes—they were cassettes. Then I listened to CDs of him speaking and his lectures and sermons, and I would read his books. Thank God he was so prolific that he was moved to write such extraordinary books.

In fact, I came to realize with this kind of brilliance—and others have pointed this out, but it struck me back in the eighties—this is a modern-day Apostle Paul. He has that kind of intellect, that kind of ability. And yet he's able to discuss anything with anybody on any level. But his life is a living, breathing, walking testimonial.

I love the quote that Steven Curtis Chapman used in Chuck Colson's own voice in ''Heaven and the Real World,'' where you hear Chuck's voice say these things. Chuck said:

I meet millions who tell me that they feel demoralized by the decay around us. Where is the hope? The hope that each of us has is not in who governs us or what laws are passed or what great things we do as a Nation. Our hope is in the power of God working through the hearts of people. And that's where our hope is in this country. That's where our hope is in life.

As he pointed out on more than one occasion, our hope—the Kingdom of God—will not arrive on Air Force One. And any hope of that happening is just misplaced.

Well, I have a brother about 8 years younger, now a Baptist pastor near Richmond, and Bill had acquired Chuck Colson's new novel called ''Gideon's Torch.'' And as a man who had worked in the White House, to have him write a novel which, as you read it breathlessly, you realize these things could easily happen, every one of them, just as he spells out. It was an incredible book.

When I met Chuck Colson, I asked him, Are you going to write any other novels? That was just a fantastic novel. And he said, My publisher tells me people are not buying my fiction. They want my nonfiction. And I want God to use me however he can use me. If it's more productive, more helpful to people to write nonfiction, I'll write nonfiction.

He also said writing ''Gideon's Torch,'' a novel, was far more difficult than writing the nonfiction, which he does. I'm not sure that it's still in print, but I would hope that after his passing there would be a resurgence of requests and people would get that book and greatly grow and benefit from it.

I just wanted to share a couple of things from his book ''God and Government.'' He came to the Hill to provide this to many of us. As my friends here know, one of the benefits of being in Congress—and there are plenty of things that aren't benefits—but one of the benefits is getting to become friends with people you have as heroes. And Chuck Colson was one of my heroes. He was someone I truly looked up

to and I benefited from. And even before he knew me, he was a mentor.

At page 69 he says:

Whether or not God's existence can be proved, the evidence can be rationally probed and weighed. (Author C.S.) Lewis does so compellingly, and he cites moral law as a key piece of evidence. Clearly it is not man who has perpetuated the precepts and values that have survived through centuries and across cultures. Indeed, he has done his best to destroy them. The nature of the law restrains man, and thus its very survival presupposes a stronger force behind it—God.

Or consider the most readily observable physical evidence, the nature of the universe. One cannot look at the stars, planets, and galaxies, millions of light years away, all fixed in perfect harmony, without asking who orders them.

For centuries it was accepted that God was behind the universe because otherwise ''the origin and purpose of life would be inexplicable.'' This traditional supposition was unchallenged until the 18th century's Age of Reason, when Enlightenment thinkers announced with relief that the origins of the universe were now scientifically explainable.

But in the past few decades, science has completely reversed itself on the question of the origin of the universe. After maintaining for centuries the physical universe is eternal and therefore needs no creator, science today has uncovered dramatic new evidence that the universe did have an ultimate origin, that it began at a finite time in the past—just as the Bible teaches.

Chuck Colson will be missed. But thank God and thank Chuck Colson that he has left us so much in the way of wisdom that we can draw from in the days ahead. We will be remembering his family and all of those who loved and miss Chuck in our prayers.

With that, I appreciate being yielded to on behalf of Chuck Colson.

Mr. HULTGREN. Thank you, Congressman GOHMERT. I appreciate it.

I do thank my friends that have been here. There's many others that wanted to be here tonight and weren't able to. One of those was our colleague Congressman MIKE PENCE from Indiana, who was unable to be here but wrote a letter. Many others also over the last couple of weeks have paid tribute to the life of Chuck Colson. I would like to recognize just a couple of them.

One was Reverend Billy Graham, evangelist. He said:

For more than 35 years, Chuck Colson, a former prisoner himself, has had a tremendous ministry, reaching into prisons and jails with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. When I get to heaven and see Chuck again, I believe I will also see many, many people there whose lives have been transformed because of the message he shared with them. He will be greatly missed by many, including me. I count it a privilege to have called him friend.

Again, that was Reverend Billy Graham.

I do think it is amazing to look at some of the history of the impact and really the decisions that Chuck Colson made that we talked about. Before he went to prison, his conversion, many were skeptical about that, thinking it was a ploy to get a lighter sentence. Clearly, it wasn't, when you look at the fruits of what happened afterwards.

And I just want to go through a quick history of Prison Fellowship, something that, again, has had an impact on millions of people around the world.

In 1976, a Watergate crook found Prison Fellowship. In 1974, the Watergate scandal sent White House Special Counsel Chuck Colson to Federal prison. A new Christian, he faced challenges and adversities that tested his faith and self-respect. Paroled in 1975, Chuck could easily have opted to close that book on that dark time and move on with his life as inconspicuously as possible. But Chuck knew that God wanted him to hold on to his ties to prison and continue to identify with his fellow prisoners, despite the skepticism and scorn of Chuck's critics.

□ 2100

So in 1976, with little more than a vision and the support of a few friends, Chuck began Prison Fellowship to proclaim to inmates the love and power of Jesus Christ.

In 1977, the next year after the founding, Prison Fellowship goes behind bars. At first, through the support of the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Prison Fellowship began transporting dozens of Christian prisoners out of prison for intensive training through Washington Discipleship Seminars held in the nation's capital. Those prisoners then were returned to prison to evangelize and teach their colleagues. But in 1977, Prison Fellowship ran into a hurdle when a warden from Wisconsin refused to furlough one of his prisoners to attend the Washington Discipleship Seminars. Instead, he challenged: If your program is so good, why don't you bring it inside the prison?

Chuck and his team were up for the task, and 3 weeks later, 93 inmates attended Prison Fellowship's first ever in-prison seminar in Oxford, Wisconsin. That seminar paved the way for hundreds of thousands of prisoners across the country to receive biblically based teaching through in-prison seminars and Bible studies over the past 33 years. That first in-prison event also reinforced the importance of training local volunteers to go inside prisons and build relationships with inmates. Today, Prison Fellowship ministry relies on a volunteer network of well over 20,000 volunteers.

In 1979, Britain catches the vision. Prison Fellowship International takes off.

In 1982, ex-bank robber reaches out to prisoners' kids and starts Angel Tree. The same year that Chuck started Prison Fellowship, a former bank robber named Mary Kay Beard was released from prison in Alabama. And, as in Chuck's life, God graciously transformed the shame of prison into a golden opportunity for ministry. In anticipation of Christmas 1982, Mary Kay organized Angel Tree, a ministry to provide gifts to prisoners' children on behalf of the incarcerated parents. Beginning with 556 children that first year, Angel Tree has since exploded into a geyser of ministry opportunities reaching more than 400,000 American children of prisoners every single year, and their families, with the transforming message of Jesus Christ. Over 6 million children have received gifts from Angel Tree from their parents donated by someone else in the name of their parent. Again, the lost victim oftentimes of crime.

In 1983, Justice Fellowship hits the stage. As Prison Fellowship was expanding its ministry inside prisons, its leadership saw firsthand all of the signs of a justice system in chaos: overcrowded and violent prisons, neglected crime victims, communities shattered by crime. In 1983, Justice Fellowship was formed to promote biblical standards of justice in our Nation's justice system.

Justice Fellowship volunteers successfully implemented reforms across the country: victim-offender reconciliation programs; alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders; victims' rights legislation, and more. In 1995, former California legislator and ex-prisoner Pat Nolan took the helm of Justice Fellowship and has since spearheaded efforts to pass the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000, the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003, and the Second Chance Act of 2007.

In 1992, Operation Starting Line sweeps North Carolina. In 1991, North Carolina's Secretary of Correction Aaron Johnson was pondering the condition of his prisons and saw only one solution—spiritual transformation. In an unprecedented move, he invited Prison Fellowship into every prison in North Carolina to lead a contemporary version of an old-time revival meeting. So in the fall of 1992, using teams of professional athletes, musicians, comedians, and powerhouse speakers, Prison Fellowship's inaugural Starting Line evangelistic campaign swept through all of North Carolina's 90-plus prisons, sharing the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. Since North Carolina, similar evangelistic events have spread to prisons all across the country. And in 1999, Prison Fellowship joined other Christian organizations to launch Operation Starting Line, now an affiliation of 37 ministries committed to prison evangelism.

In 1997, a new kind of prison ministry is born, Interchange Freedom Initiative, a values-based reentry program founded upon the teachings of Christ. With the full endorsement of then-Governor George W. Bush, Prison Fellowship and the State of Texas partnered to launch the very first IFI program in a prison unit near Houston. Interchange Freedom Initiative immerses its inmates-all volunteer participants in spiritual, educational, vocational, and life skills training from an unmistakably Christian perspective. Today, IFI is active in both men's and women's prisons in five states: Arkansas,

Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, and Texas, and many other States are seeing the value of this, of really turning around recidivism. That we've got to provide all of this for our inmates for them to really have true life change.

After God parted the Jordan River, allowing the Israelites to cross on dry land into their new home, He commanded them to erect a memorial of stones. These would stand as a reminder of the miracles God had done for them, Joshua explained. Today we seldom use stones as reminders of God's provision. Instead, we preserve God's works in written accounts and photographs. But the reason remains the same: to remember ''the hand of the Lord is powerful''—that was from Joshua 4:24—''and by His hand, He leads us.''

Since this time, Prison Fellowship has continued to minister around the world, but Chuck Colson also had other activities I've already talked about, and Congressman MCINTYRE talked about the Centurion program, the impact it had on our lives, a hundred citizens each year going through the Centurion program.

He also started the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, which again had a huge impact and has been directly involved in BreakPoint, which is a weekly radio program that is on.

He also was awarded 15 honorary doctorate degrees. And in 1993, Chuck Colson was awarded the Templeton Prize for progress in religion. This is a very prestigious award. It's given to a person who has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension. With the Templeton Prize is a $1 million cash award. Chuck Colson could have taken that and spent it on his family. Instead, he donated it to prison ministry to impact prisoners' lives. He also continued to donate throughout his entire life all of the royalties that he received from his books along with royalties from speaking.

In 2008, President George W. Bush honored Chuck Colson with the President's Citizen's Medal.

So again, tonight we have taken just a few minutes to honor a man who had a huge impact on our lives. Many of us in Congress have been impacted by him through his writings and teachings and through our friendship with him. He has also had a huge impact on prisoners around the world and the plight of prisoners, and recognizing that all human life is valuable and needs to be respected and honored and treated with that respect that it deserves.

From the service today, there were a couple of different things. There were a couple of different readings that were done at the service, and I would like to close with this.

First, one of the readings was from Philippians, chapter 3. This was a very important passage for Chuck Colson:

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him. Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached this goal, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

My friend STEVE KING had talked about this radical transformation in his life, and this first pointed to that radical transformation where he could have had everything in this world, was right there next to the seat of power in the Presidency and saw how fleeting that was. He could have had money and resources when he got out of prison and a career in law or so many other things, but instead decided to give back to prisoners and to others as well.

Many would ask: Why would he do that? Well, there was another passage that was read today. This was read by one of his grandchildren. This is from Matthew 25:

Jesus said, Then the king will say to those on his right hand, ''Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was in prison and you visited me.'' Then the righteous will answer him, ''Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it when we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'' And the king will answer to them, ''Truly I tell you, just as you did it for one of the least of those who are members of my family, you did it for me.''

Then he will say to those on his left hand: ''You are the accursed. Depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devils and his angels, for I was hungry and you gave me no food. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger, and you did not welcome me; naked, and you did not give me clothing; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me.''

Then they will also answer:

''Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and didn't take care of you?''

Then he will answer them:

''Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.''

□ 2110

Chuck Colson saw what his God had done for him, the incredible power of his redemption and transformation that happened in his life, and wanted to share that with those of greatest need. He saw that as the weakest, the poorest, those in prison.

He was also dramatically impacted by his grandson Max. Max is diagnosed with autism. Again, Chuck saw the incredible value of every single life. Chuck was a hard driver, a type A personality to the maximum, but he learned from his grandson Max patience and understanding and love.

So I am so grateful again for the relationship that I've been able to build with Chuck Colson and with his family. We will miss him so dearly.

I want to end this time again by reading from one of Chuck Colson's books. I think this is so powerful. This, again, was part of the ceremony today, the memorial service over at the National Cathedral. This was from Chuck Colson's book, it's him talking in his book, ''Loving God'':

Easter, 1980. As I sat on the platform waiting my turn at the pulpit, my mind began to drift back in time to scholarships, to honors earned, cases argued and won, great decisions made from lofty government offices. My life had been the great American Dream fulfilled. But all at once I realized that it was not my success God had used to enable me to help those in this prison or in hundreds of others like it. My life of success was not what made this morning so glorious. All my achievements meant nothing in God's economy. No, the real legacy of my life was my biggest failure, that I was an ex-convict. My greatest humiliation, being sent to prison, was the beginning of God's greatest use of my life. He chose the one thing in which I could not glory for his glory.

Confronted with this staggering truth, I discovered in those few months in the prison chapel that my world was turned upside down. I understood with a jolt that I had been looking at my life backwards. But now I could see, only when I lost everything I thought made Chuck Colson a great guy, had I found the true self God intended me to be and the true purpose in my life.

It is not what we do that matters, but what a sovereign God chooses to do through us. God doesn't want our success; he wants us. He doesn't demand our achievements; he demands our obedience. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of paradox, where, through the ugly defeat of the cross, the Holy God is utterly glorified. Victory comes through defeat, healing through brokenness, finding self through losing self.

Chuck Colson truly was one of my heroes, someone I will miss dearly, someone who impacted my family. I will think of him all the time when I look at my own son, Koleson, named after Chuck Colson. But I just want to thank my friends for joining me tonight to honor this great man, honor this great life, and be challenged together to follow the example that he left for us.

Thank you, Chuck. We'll never forget you.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PENCE. Mr Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to a man we remembered just a few short hours ago at the National Cathedral here in Washington, DC.

The Good Book says, "Render therefore to all their due . . . honor to whom honor." Charles W. Colson is certainly worthy of honor and esteem.

The earthly life of this consequential American has come to an end and I mark this occasion with a sense of profound personal loss.

Chuck Colson rose to the heights of political power and fell to the depths of disgrace. But in his fall, he found redemption in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Given a second chance, Chuck Colson devoted his life to carrying the

Christian message of second chances to those in prison, and he saw countless lives changed by his compassion and example.

His voice of moral clarity was an inspiration to millions of Americans and made him an invaluable counselor to leaders in government and business. I will always count it a privilege to have been able to call him my dear friend and mentor. His dedication to moral integrity, serving his fellow man and his steadfast faith have always and will always be an inspiration to me and my family.

Karen and I offer our deepest condolences to Patty, the whole Colson family and to all who mourn the loss of Chuck Colson.

CHINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, first let me suggest that I join with my colleagues in honoring the memory of Chuck Colson, a man who also meant a lot to me as an individual. Those of us who come from California and remember Richard Nixon coming out there over the years and remember the great work that Chuck Colson did for our prison community in California, we're very grateful for that. He taught us really the true meaning of Christian compassion. I personally was a beneficiary of that knowledge and that spirit that he helped us understand and develop within our own hearts. So I would like to join my colleagues in that.

But today I rise to call attention to the hundreds of millions of public dollars we have spent and continue to spend in the form of foreign aid to the People's Republic of China—better known as Communist China to those of us who have spent years trying to fight that oppressive regime.

Our national debt is over $15.7 trillion and is growing. We are spending $1.5 trillion more every year than we are taking in. Forty-three cents out of every dollar we spend is borrowed money, and Communist China is the single largest foreign holder of United States debt.

The interest we pay on this ever-growing debt is increasingly squeezing out spending on other worthwhile programs. Why, then, are we borrowing money from the Chinese Communist Government—to be repaid, of course, with interest—and then using that borrowed money to finance programs in which we are giving money to these various programs that go to China, the country from whom we are borrowing?

Remember, the government of this aid recipient considers the United States its enemy. They are happy to loan us the money and they are happy that we are stupid enough to give it back to them in terms of aid and, yes, other types of programs, including giving it back to them in investments.

We are strengthening the government that considers us an enemy. As we look into this situation, we know that they see the U.S. as their enemy, just as Japan saw us as their enemy before World War II—the Japanese militarists—just as Nazi Germany saw the American people as their enemy, and just as the communist governments that threatened the world for over four decades after World War II, just as they saw the United States as their enemy.

Yes, we are the enemy of tyrants and vicious regimes that are expansionary and threaten the peace and the freedom of the world. We can be proud of that. The Chinese know that. The Communist Chinese know that. That's why they don't like us. That's why they consider us their enemy.

China is the world's largest human rights abuser. China's Government smashes those who advocate freedom of the press, freedom of religion. Those who, of course, suggest that the Chinese Government should be accountable to its people are arrested and thrown into jail, or murdered.

It arrests Chinese practitioners of Falun Gong, for example. Falun Gong is a Chinese religious movement which stresses yoga and meditation. Beijing has these devout and passive people, practitioners in a simple religion that is meditation and yoga. These people are arrested and they're thrown into prison where they are murdered. And then the Chinese Government, after murdering these people for their religious convictions, sells their organs and body parts. It doesn't get much more ghoulish than this.

On the international scene, China is responsible for promoting and facilitating the proliferation of nuclear technology between North Korea, Pakistan, Iran, and others. China is responsible for empowering the Burmese junta that imprisoned Aung San Suu Kyi for years. It has allied itself with rogue regimes all over the world, like Sudan and Venezuela and other regimes that are tyrants in their own country and threaten the security of their neighbors and of the United States.

China's aggressive foreign policy and hostile naval actions are threatening the sovereignty of American allies like Japan and the Philippines. It is Communist China that has stolen and is currently stealing most of our prized military and commercial secrets. China has stolen the designs for every one of our nuclear warheads.

Chinese cyberspies have stolen all of our trade secrets. All of the money we put in to invest in research and development they steal and utilize. No wonder they're as far ahead in their rocket program as they are when they took the technology from us; they stole it from us. They have infected our critical electronic technology infrastructure with malicious viruses and then they, of course, break into our classified systems.

It is China which has embarked on the most significant arms buildup since the Cold War. And I ask: Who do they think is their enemy? Who do they think is their enemy? The United States of America. While we not only become susceptible to them, not only do we put ourselves in an inferior position by borrowing money from them, but we also end up giving that money back to them in aid programs.

□ 2120

And that is what I would like to talk about tonight, the fact that how can we possibly borrow money from the world's worst human rights abuser, a country that looks at us as their enemy. Then we become vulnerable to that country. But at the same time while we are becoming vulnerable, we then increase our investment in the private sector of that country. But also we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars in aid programs to the communist Chinese regime.

Well, with that in mind, I asked the Congressional Research Service to assemble a list of programs that the Congress funds that go directly to supporting development and the economy of China. It is a partial list because there are so many programs that, after weeks of work, they could not even find them all. This list that I am about to read is of projects that are funded and have been funded over the last 3 years, at the same time, while the Obama administration was spending $1.5 trillion more annually than we're taking in.

So while we're spending more than we're taking in by $1.5 trillion, we are spending on programs that are going to China, and it's China who's lending us the money in order to spend that extra $1.5 trillion. This is an insane policy.

And this spending on China is ongoing. I'm just giving you the facts from the last 3 years, and it is ongoing.

To make sure we all understand exactly where we are spending or sending our taxpayer money, I am going to read a list of programs that we have funded in China, and ask, as we are going through this list, after every time I go through the money, couldn't we have spent this money better in the United States? Or wouldn't it have been better not to borrow it in the first place and add this to $1.5 trillion every year for the last 3 years that we've been putting our people into debt?

So every one of these things that I read, ask yourself that question: Is this in the best interest of the United States? Is it in the best interest of our children who we're putting more in debt by borrowing and giving it to China and having to pay the interest? They're going to have to pay off the loan and the interest to China in the future.

So here's a partial list, and I'm going to round off the figures to an understandable number. And many of these deal with ''environment.''

Why are we trying to make the environment in China better so that the people of China can basically out compete us in our business dealings? That

should be part of the cost of production in China. But, no, we are picking up that cost. Not only that, our people are investing in China and building their factories.

Why did the EPA give, for example, $141,000 to the Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development in Agriculture to reduce greenhouse gases in China? In China.

Why did the EPA give $125,000 to the Eastern Research Group that reduces greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the National Science Foundation give $63,000 to Siena College for Neutrino Physics at Daya Bay in China?

And let me add, some of these will be repeats because we did this, this is over a 3-year period, because we have several programs over the years where we're giving money to the same group in China; and that spending continues, let me add.

Why did the EPA give $150,000 to China for Coal Information Institute for reducing greenhouse gases?

Why did the EPA give $100,000 to Guizhou International Corporation Center for Environmental Protection for reducing greenhouse gases? That's in China, of course.

Why did the EPA give almost $300,000 to the Ministry of Environment Protection in China for reducing health risks? Don't we have health risks in the United States? Don't we have some needs of our own? Why are we giving this money to China?

Why did the EPA give $150,000 to Tsinghua—I'm sorry I can't pronounce this right—University Department of Building Sciences for Environmental Governance in China?

Why did USAID give the Asia Foundation almost $2 million, it was $1.7 million, to build environmental governance in China?

Why did USAID give $500,000 to the American Bar Association to build environmental governance in China? Don't we have some things in the United States where we could use a $500,000 grant for some of our local communities? Couldn't they use some help? Instead we sent it to China. But first, of course, we borrowed it from China. So to give it to them, we'll have to repay China and the interest in order to give it to them.

Why did USAID give $300,000 to the University of Massachusetts to improve the quality of judicial education in China? We're giving them $300,000 in order to improve judicial education in China?

Why did USAID give $200,000 to the University of the Pacific to advance the rule of law in China?

Why did USAID give $55,000 to Nexant, an NGO, to be an administrator of China program evaluations?

Why did USAID give $2 million to Winrock International Institute for Agriculture for sustainable livelihoods in China? I guess we don't need any help in our farm belt. I guess our farmers don't need my help in California where they're going broke because the water has been cut off to them in order to protect some delta smelt. Our guys are going crazy and going broke, our farmers are, but we're going to find $2 million borrowed from China in order to give back to China in order to aid the Institute of Agriculture so that they can have sustainable livelihoods in China.

Why did USAID give $2 million to the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, an NGO, for sustainable livelihoods in China? Think there are any Americans that need sustainable livelihoods?

Why did USAID give $2 million to the Institute of Sustainable Communities to reduce greenhouse gases in China? Oh, yes. We need to make sure we pay all of China's environmental expenses; otherwise, they won't accept global government like our government expects us to accept.

Why did USAID give $749,000, almost $750,000, to the ICF International to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did USAID give $500,000 to the Asia Foundation for humanitarian assistance to China?

Why did the USDA give $10,000 to Texas Agriculture Experiment for biological control of forest insects in China? Do our forests not need this?

Why are we borrowing money when we can't afford to do these things in our own country?

Why did the USDA give almost $100,000 to Rutgers State University for climate change adaptation in China?

Now isn't that great? We're paying for them to adapt to climate change. Then, of course, they'll join the global government which these same people are trying to force on us. But then we are under a mountain of debt, our children, in order to pay for their adaptation to climate change. Not, of course, to say that anybody in the United States, our farmers or any other industry, doesn't need to adapt to the different changes that go on in the climate, even if they are natural changes in our climate.

Why did the Department of Energy give $2.5 million to the University of Michigan for the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center? Shouldn't we be developing our own clean energy in the United States? Instead, we borrow money from China in order to spend it in China, and then we have to pay debt, interest on that debt, and pay back the debt. Our children will, of course, be doing that.

Why did the Department of Energy give $2.5 million to West Virginia University for a U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center? Again, a research center, perhaps the same research center, but the next year. So that makes it $5 million that we've given to that research center in China.

Why did the Department of Energy give $1.2 million to West Virginia University for Long-Term Environmental and Economic Impacts of Coal Liquefaction in China? That's $1.2 million to, yes, spend through West Virginia University. Don't we have coal liquefaction environmental studies going on in the United States that could use that money for research to make sure that our coal burns more cleanly and effectively here, rather than giving that money and information to China's benefit and borrowing it from them in order to give it to them?

□ 2130

Why did the Department of Energy give $5.3 million to Brookhaven National Laboratory in the Daya Bay nuclear project in China? That's over $5 million. By the way, that's $5 million to this nuclear facility.

Let me just note that, in my district, we have a problem with a nuclear power plant that's going through some very serious problems right now, San Onofre. We maybe could have used that $5 million to help us correct the problems at the San Onofre plant. But no. We borrowed the money from China to give it back to them to solve their problems while our children will be forced to pay that debt off. We get no benefit out of it except a load of debt on our children.

Why did the Department of Energy give almost $400,000 to the State University of Albany to study climate change in China? Oh, yes.

Why did the Department of Energy give $300,000 to the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory for the modeling of regional climate change in China? Again, it's using climate change as a vehicle to give them money that we are borrowing from them in the first place, which we will then have to repay.

Why did the Department of Energy give $256,000 to the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for research at the Daya Bay nuclear project in China? Again, another $250,000 to this Daya Bay nuclear project. It could have been the next year because this is over a 3-year period. These are some of these. By the way, it's not anywhere near all of them over the 3-year period, but all of these are taken from a list over that 3-year period. Yes, we could have used some of that money to make sure that we didn't have a problem in our own districts.

Why did the Department of Energy give $210,000 to Rutgers State University for Site Science for the Atmospheric Radiation Measurement Mobile Facility in China? Why are we doing that? Why are we providing them that type of a foundation, a scientific foundation, so that they can prosper and so that they won't have to spend their resources paying for that type of scientific infrastructure?

Why did the Department of Energy give $135,000 to the University of Maryland for the climactic effects of aerosols in China? There you go—aerosols. It's an issue from way back then, which some of us think was not entirely reported, but now we are still giving almost $150,000 to check out aerosols in China for their benefit.

Why did the Department of Energy give over $500,000 to the University of

Houston for a proposal to measure neutrino mixing at the Daya Bay nuclear experiment in China? Again, over a half a million dollars while we're having trouble with our own nuclear program.

We should be developing our own new generation of nuclear power which will be safe—and we can do it—but we don't have the money to do it. Why? We're giving millions of dollars to China and to others, money that should go to developing our own new technology here. Of course, we are borrowing the money from China in order to give it to them, which leaves our children in debt, and they'll have to pay it all off with interest.

Why did the Department of Energy give $70,000 to Colorado State University for the climactic effects of aerosols in China?

Why did the Department of Energy give $19,000 to Pennsylvania State University for factors influencing energy use and carbon emissions in China? Isn't that nice that we gave the University of Pennsylvania money to study this for China so they will have the information in China and will be able to use it for their benefit rather than studying things in the United States to help us so we can do better here.

Why did the EPA give over $500,000—$550,000 to be exact—to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the EPA give almost a half a million dollars to the Research Triangle Institute to reduce greenhouse gases in China? This is basically making equipment more efficient. Why aren't we making our equipment more efficient? The Chinese should buy it from us rather than our having to relocate our manufacturing plants in China. Yes, let them buy it from us—how about that?—and give our own people jobs rather than borrowing money so that they could have the technology. We are going in debt so that they can have the technology, and our children will have to pay the debt back with interest, and they will sell us the equipment. The Chinese will sell it to us in a generation.

Why did the EPA give $300,000 to the Energy and Environmental Development Research Center to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the EPA give almost $250,000 to the Research Triangle Institute again—probably a second year of their grant—to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the EPA give almost $200,000 to the China University of Petroleum in Beijing to reduce greenhouse gases in China? Can't any of our people use this research money to help our country and our technology become cleaner and more efficient? No. We're giving it to China, and then they will sell that technology back to us after they manufacture it years ahead of us because we subsidize their R&D.

Why did the EPA give almost $200,000 to the China Urban Construction Design & Research Institute to reduce greenhouse gases in China? Again, here we are spending money to help them design houses in China. Wonderful. None of our designers need any help.

Why did the EPA give almost $300,000 to the Eastern Research Group to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the EPA give over $100,000 to Guangzhou City, China, to reduce greenhouse gases?

Why did the EPA give $110,000 to the Guizhou International Cooperation Center for Environmental Protection to reduce greenhouse gases in China? Do we have no need for this money in the United States? Does our equipment not need to be more efficient? Should we not be investigating putting money into the development of cleaner energy sources here? With all this money we're giving away, we could be developing clean energy sources, if nothing else, for the new generation of nuclear power plants, which is starving for research money. No, we're giving it to China.

Why did the EPA give almost $100,000 to the China University of Petroleum in Beijing to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the EPA give $200,000 to California State University at Fullerton to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the EPA give $85,000 to ICF International to build climate change management capacity in China?

Why did the EPA give $135,000 to Information Institute to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the EPA give over $50,000 to Advanced Resources International to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the EPA give $31,000 to the Energy and Environmental Development Research Center for biogas development?

Each and every one of these items I am talking about is an item on which we spent money out of the Federal budget. We took it out of the taxpayers' pockets—or actually, we borrowed it from China—and then left them with the debt in their pockets, the IOU in their pockets, and we gave it to China rather than taking that money, those resources, and spending it in the United States to develop the technology here.

Like I say, I've been struggling for years to get the new generation of nuclear power developed here. It has been starved—it has not been given what it needs—and we're giving away these hundreds of millions of dollars to the Chinese, which we, of course, are borrowing. In the end, we will pay them for the technology because they will be sending the manufactured items here.

Why did the EPA give $30,000 to the China Association of Rural Energy Industry to reduce greenhouse gases in China?

Why did the EPA give almost $800,000 to the China State Environmental Protection Administration to reduce transboundary air pollution? Well, that's great. We have to pay for everybody's air pollution in the world. We are borrowing money from China, but we have to pay for their reduction of transboundary air pollution.

Why did the EPA give almost $200,000 to the Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection to build environmental management capacity?

Why did the EPA give $120,000 to the Tianjin Environmental Protection Bureau for water pollution management? Now, there is something we don't need any money for around our country—water pollution. I live in a coastal district. We could use that money for water pollution. We've got sewer pipes and water purification systems that need to be upgraded. But no. We're borrowing money from China to give it to China rather than having that money spent in the United States.

Why did the National Science Foundation give $62,000 to Sienna College for neutrino physics at, again, the Daya Bay nuclear project in China? Well, we're not spending the money here to develop our own clean nuclear energy.

□ 2140

Why did USAID give Management Systems International almost $500,000 to improve environmental governance in China?

Why did USAID give Vermont Law School—get this—$1,725,000 for improved environmental governance in China?

Why did USAID give the Institute for Sustainable Communities half a million dollars to save energy and reduce greenhouse gases in China? Can't we put this use in these structures in the United States?

Why did USAID give the University of the Pacific a half a million dollars for environmental governance in China?

Why did USAID give the American Bar Association $500,000 for environmental governance in China?

Why did USAID give the University of Massachusetts $420,000 for environmental governance in China?

Why did USAID give the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development $150,000 for development assistance in China?

Why did USAID give Management Systems International $50,000 for development assistance?

Why did USAID give the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors $2 million for sustainable livelihoods in China? Don't we have people in the United States who need money like that? Don't we have people, indeed, here who need a sustainable livelihood? Why are we giving it to China and borrowing it from them in order to give it to them and leaving our kids in debt?

Why did USAID give Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors $400,000 for sustainable livelihoods in China?

Why did the USDA give the University of Science and Technology of China $150,000 for research? Don't our

universities need money for research for things that we can use here in the United States to make our life better?

Why did the USDA give the SB Group Consultants $25,000 for education in China?

Why did the USDA give Management and Engineering Technologies International $40,000 to improve forest health in China? We don't need any help with our forests here, do we?

Why did the USDA give Yangzhou University $36,000 to improve biological controls in China?

Why did the USDA give Management and Engineering Technologies International $8,000 for administrative purposes in China?

Why did the USDA give Utah State University almost $400,000 for biomass research in China? I happen to know American companies and people who are investing in biomass research. Why are we giving almost $400,000 to help the Chinese in biomass research, which will compete with our own companies that are trying to develop this very important and unique energy source? Which by the way for the environmentalists who are watching, who think that I may be making light of climate change, I support biomass and other clean-energy programs that make sense. This one makes sense. Our companies are investing in it, and yet we're borrowing money from China in order to give it to them to do biomass research to compete with our own people and put them out of business.

Why did the USDA give Tetra Tech EM $325,000 for administrative purposes for environmental programs in China?

Why did USAID give the Institute of Sustainable Communities—get this—another $500,000 to save energy and reduce greenhouse gases in China? Don't we have the need in our communities to do things in a sustainable way in the United States? No. They don't have that money now. It's in China. We borrowed it from China to give to them. Now we're going to have to pay the bill back after we've given it to them.

Why did USAID give the University of the Pacific $500,000 for environmental governance in China? Again a half a million dollars.

Why did USAID give the American Bar Association $500,000 for environmental governance?

Why did USAID give the University of Massachusetts $420,000 for Environmental Governance in China?

Why did USAID give the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development $150,000 for Development Assistance in China?

Why did USAID give Management Systems International $47,484 for Development Assistance in China?

Why did USAID give Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors $2.4 million for Sustainable Livelihoods in China?

Why did USAID give The Asia Foundation $1,025,000 to improve Disaster Management in China?

Why did USDA give the University of Science and Technology of China $150,000 for Research?

Why did USDA give Guangzhou Dxcel Advertising $18,500 for Administrative Purposes in China?

Why did USDA give Management and Engineering Technologies International $40,994 to improve forest health in China?

Why did USDA give Management and Engineering Technologies International $7,973 for administrative purposes in China?

Why did USDA give Southern University $300,000 for improved Education in China?

Why did USDA give Colorado State University $300,000 for improved Education in China?

I will end my remarks tonight by suggesting that what we are doing is insane. America will never survive with such a mindset with these mind-boggling giveaway programs where we're giving away money, we're giving this type of support to a country and a government that is totalitarian, that kills Christians and other religious people, who hates the United States and is our biggest potential enemy. That is not the Chinese people. That's the Chinese Government.

The Chinese dictatorship has cover today, and the reason why these policies go on is they have cover from some of our most powerful corporations. We have permitted overly subsidized American corporations to set up manufacturing facilities in China, and now they need to stand in the good graces of the Chinese Government. When I come up and say things like this, corporations in the United States try to provide cover for the Chinese dictatorship. We should not be providing aid to the Chinese. We should not be encouraging our corporations to go there and become vulnerable to the Chinese in order to make a quick profit.

I would suggest over the last 10 years, since most-favored trading status has been given to China, we have put America in a very vulnerable spot. We at the very least should reassess our relationship with China, but at the very least cut off any aid programs that go to this communist regime, this totalitarian regime that looks at us as their enemy.

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

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. NUGENT) at 2 o'clock and 28 minutes a.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4310, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Mr. BISHOP of Utah, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112–485) on the resolution (H. Res. 661) providing for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on May 14, 2012, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 2668. To designate the station of the United States Border located at 2136 South Naco Highway in Bisbee, Arizona, as the 'Brian A. Terry Border Patrol Station'.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 29 minutes a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until today, Thursday, May 17, 2012, 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:

6021. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Importation of Pomegranates From Chile Under a Systems Approach [Docket No.: APHIS-2010-0024] (RIN: 0579-AD38) received April 18, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6022. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Importation of Fresh Pitaya Fruit From Central America Into the Continental United States [Docket No.: APHIS-2010-0113] (RIN: 0579-AD40) received April 18, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6023. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Importation of Clementines From Spain; Amendment to Inspection Provisions [Docket No.: APHIS-2010-0036] (RIN: 0579-AD27) received April 18, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6024. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General John E. Sterling, Jr., United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

6025. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Ann E. Rondeau, United States Navy, and her advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

6026. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Asian Longhorned Beetle; Additions to Quarantined Areas in Massachusetts [Docket No.: APHIS-2010-0128] received April 18, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6027. A letter from the Chief Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevations Determinations [Docket ID: FEMA-2012-0003] received April 18, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

6028. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's ''Major'' final rule — Further Definition of ''Swap Dealer'', ''Security-Based Swap Dealer'', ''Major Swap Participant'', ''Major Security-Based Swap Participant'' and ''Eligible Contract Participant'' [Release No.: 34-66868; File No. S7-39-10] (RIN: 3235-AK65) received April 30, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

6029. A letter from the Executive Director, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting the Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6030. A letter from the Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's ''Major'' final rule — Medicaid Program; Community First Choice Option [CMS-2337-F] (RIN: 0398-AQ35) received May 1, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6031. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a proposal for the reauthorization for the Medical Device User Fee Act (MDUFA); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6032. A letter from the Associate Bureau Chief for Cybersecurity and Communications Reliability, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — The Proposed Extension of Part 4 of the Connected Voice Over Internet Protocol Service Providers and Broadband Internet Service Providers [PS Docket No. 11-82] received April 16, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6033. A letter from the Pricing Policy Division, Wireline Competition, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — In the Matter of Connect America Fund; A National Broadband Plan for Out Future; Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers; High-Cost Universal Service Support; Developing a Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime; Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service; Lifeline and Link-Up; Universal Service Reform — Mobility Fund [WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WC Docket No. 05-337, CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, WT Docket No. 10-208] April 19, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6034. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's report for the period January 16, 2011 to January 15, 2012 on the activities of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) and U.S. participation in that organization; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6035. A letter from the Presiding Governor, Broadcasting Board of Governors, transmitting the Broadcasting Board of Governors' 2011 Annual Report, pursuant to Section 305(a)(9) of the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994, Pub. L. 103-236, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 6204; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6036. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's annual report for Fiscal Year 2011 prepared in accordance with Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6037. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Community Development Quota Program [Docket No.: 070718367-2061-02] (RIN: 0648-AV33) received April 19, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

6038. A letter from the Special Assistant, Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission, transmitting the January 2012 Report to Congress and the Alaska State Legislature; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6039. A letter from the Secretary of the Commission, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Revised Jurisdictional Threshold for Section 8 of the Clayton Act received April 19, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6040. A letter from the Assistant Chief Counsel for Hazardous Materials Safety, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Hazardous Materials; Packages Intended for Transport by Aircraft [Docket No.: PHMSA-07-29364 (HM-231A)] (RIN: 2137-AE32) received April 18, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6041. A letter from the Regulatory Ombudsman, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's ''Major'' final rule — National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners [Docket No.: FMCSA-2009-0363] (RIN: 2126-AA97) received May 15, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6042. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's biennial report on evaluation, research and technical assistance activities supported by ''The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program''; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6043. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Examination of returns and Claims for refund, credit, or abatement; determination of correct tax liability (Rev. Proc. 201 2-21) April 19, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

6044. A letter from the Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's ''Major'' final rule — Medicare Program; Extension of Certain Wage Index Reclassifications and Special Exemptions for the Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment Systems (PPS) for Acute Care Hospitals and the Hospital Outpatient PPS [CMS-1442-N] received May 3, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

6045. A letter from the Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's ''Major'' final rule — Medicare and Medicaid Program; Regulatory Provisions to Promote Program Efficiency, Transparency, and Burden Reduction [CMS-9070-F] (RIN: 0938-AQ96) received May 15, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

6046. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Memorandum of justification for the President's waiver of the restrictions on the provision of funds to the Palestinian Authority; jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations.

6047. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the annual report on the National Security Education Program (NSEP) for 2011, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1906; jointly to the Committees on Intelligence (Permanent Select) and Education and the Workforce.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. LUCAS: Committee on Agriculture. H.R. 1840. A bill to improve consideration by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission of the costs and benefits of its regulations and orders (Rept. 112–482). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ISSA: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 373. A bill to amend the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 to ensure that actions taken by regulatory agencies are subject to that Act, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 112–483, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ISSA: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 3433. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide transparency and require certain standards in the award of Federal grants, and for other purposes; with amendments (Rept. 112–484). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

[Filed on May 17 (legislative day of May 16), 2012]

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 661. Resolution providing for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes (Rept. 112–485). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Rules, the Budget, and the Judiciary discharged from further consideration. H.R. 373 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, and ordered to be printed.

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 Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FARR, Mr. GRIJALVA,

Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. RICHARDSON):

H.R. 5781. A bill to require all newly constructed, federally assisted, single-family houses and town houses to meet minimum standards of visitability for persons with disabilities; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5782. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain plastic device book style covers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5783. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain textile device book style covers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5784. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain textile device covers and stands; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5785. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain plastic device covers and stands; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DOLD:

H.R. 5786. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on -Phenyl-7-(4,4,5,6-tetramentyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolan-2-yl)-quinoline (OSIP-690520, quinolone boronate); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 5787. A bill to provide for congressional oversight of United States agreements with the Government of Afghanistan; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. REICHERT (for himself, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. DICKS, Mr. MCDERMOTT, and Mr. SMITH of Washington):

H.R. 5788. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 103 Center Street West in Eatonville, Washington, as the ''National Park Ranger Margaret Anderson Post Office''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. POLIS (for himself, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. FILNER, and Mr. CARNAHAN):

H.R. 5789. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to implement a certain interim final or final rule regarding nutrition programs under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BACA:

H.R. 5790. A bill to provide for the transfer of the United States Postal Service surplus with respect to certain retirement benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. FLAKE:

H.R. 5791. A bill to provide for reasonable and necessary access to Wilderness Areas for the restoration of water sources, supplies, or infrastructure during a state of emergency declared by the Governor of a State; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California:

H.R. 5792. A bill to require a report on implementation of a termination of the ground combat exclusion policy for female members of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. BASS of California (for herself, Mr. ANDREWS, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. BARTLETT, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mrs. BLACK, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CLARKE of Michigan, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COSTA, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CRITZ, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. HAHN, Ms. HANABUSA, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LATHAM, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. MARINO, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MOORE, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. OLVER, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. POLIS, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. RICHARDSON, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCHILLING, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. STARK, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. WOOLSEY, and Mr. YARMUTH):

H. Res. 659. A resolution recognizing the goals and ideals of National Foster Care Month; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PALLONE:

H. Res. 660. A resolution expressing support for designation of December 12, 2012, as Foster Children's Day; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 4 of rule XXII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

206. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Senate of the State of Idaho, relative to Senate Joint Memorial No. 104 requesting that the President and the Congress reverse and reject the HHS regulation so that those who sponsor, purchase and issue health insurance plans should not be forced to violate their deeply held moral and religious convictions; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

207. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of Idaho, relative to Senate Joint Resolution No. 103 urging the Congress to endorse and enact a Community Forest Trust pilot for Idaho; jointly to the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

208. Also, a memorial of the Senate of the State of Idaho, relative to Senate Joint Memorial No. 105 urging the Congress to reexamine, reform and reauthorize the Endangered Species Act; jointly to the Committees on Natural Resources and the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY:

H.R. 5781.

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

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article 1 ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5782.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to lay and collect duties and to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5783.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to lay and collect duties and to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5784.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to lay and collect duties and to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 5785.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to lay and collect duties and to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. DOLD:

H.R. 5786.

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

Article 1, Section 8, which states that, ''The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises . . .''

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 5787.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 11, and Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. REICHERT:

H.R. 5788.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 7

''The Congress shall have Power to establish Post Offices and postroads''

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 5789.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (relating to the power of Congress to provide for the general welfare of the United States) and Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States).

By Mr. BACA:

H.R. 5790.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. FLAKE:

H.R. 5791.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2.

The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

By Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California:

H.R. 5792.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14, to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 451: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio and Mr. PRICE of Georgia.

H.R. 595: Mr. MICHAUD.

H.R. 639: Ms. BUERKLE.

H.R. 733: Mr. LARSEN of Washington and Mr. WOMACK.

H.R. 780: Ms. MATSUI.

H.R. 835: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H.R. 860: Mr. HECK.

H.R. 904: Mrs. BACHMANN.

H.R. 973: Mr. UPTON.

H.R. 1044: Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 1051: Mr. HALL.

H.R. 1066: Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 1085: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 1283: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 1327: Mr. RENACCI, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. DOLD, Mr. HUNTER, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. SCHILLING, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. MARINO, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. TERRY, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. REED, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. COBLE, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. BROOKS, Mr. HERGER, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 1340: Mr. HUELSKAMP.

H.R. 1370: Mr. BUCHANAN and Mr. CAMPBELL.

H.R. 1394: Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARINO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 1404: Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 1410: Mr. BARTON of Texas.

H.R. 1418: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

H.R. 1426: Mr. JONES and Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York.

H.R. 1478: Mr. PAULSEN.

H.R. 1498: Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 1546: Mr. JONES, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. TERRY.

H.R. 1581: Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. ROONEY, and Mrs. BIGGERT.

H.R. 1639: Mr. CLAY and Mr. QUAYLE.

H.R. 1653: Mr. HECK.

H.R. 1666: Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 1675: Ms. SEWELL, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. PASTOR of Arizona, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. AMODEI, and Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 1697: Mr. THORNBERRY.

H.R. 1733: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1756: Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 1792: Ms. PINGREE of Maine.

H.R. 1802: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BOSWELL, and Mr. PLATTS.

H.R. 1842: Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 1860: Mr. SCHOCK and Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 1955: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

H.R. 1956: Mr. RENACCI.

H.R. 1957: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia and Mr. HECK.

H.R. 1964: Mr. HURT.

H.R. 2030: Mr. ALTMIRE, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. NADLER, and Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 2051: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.

H.R. 2065: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia and Mr. CLARKE of Michigan.

H.R. 2077: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 2104: Mr. ENGEL, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 2123: Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia.

H.R. 2139: Mr. ADERHOLT.

H.R. 2238: Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 2299: Mr. KINGSTON.

H.R. 2310: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 2359: Ms. PINGREE of Maine.

H.R. 2492: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina and Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 2514: Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina.

H.R. 2569: Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 2637: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2672: Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. LATTA, and Mr. PAUL.

H.R. 2721: Mr. CUELLAR and Mr. WELCH.

H.R. 2746: Ms. MCCOLLUM and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 2780: Ms. BERKLEY.

H.R. 2787: Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 2866: Mr. DINGELL.

H.R. 2874: Mr. RIBBLE.

H.R. 2888: Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 2902: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2978: Mr. AMODEI.

H.R. 2985: Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 3087: Mr. SCHOCK.

H.R. 3125: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. LEE of California, and Ms. MATSUI.

H.R. 3173: Mr. HIGGINS and Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.

H.R. 3187: Mr. HALL, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. KING of Iowa, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, Ms. GRANGER, and Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 3200: Mr. DENT.

H.R. 3238: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H.R. 3288: Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 3308: Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina.

H.R. 3337: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 3444: Mr. BROOKS.

H.R. 3497: Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. JONES, Mr. WALDEN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. NEAL, Mr. CLAY, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. CRITZ.

H.R. 3506: Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. DEGETTE, and Ms. PINGREE of Maine.

H.R. 3541: Mr. GOSAR.

H.R. 3591: Mr. TONKO, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, and Mr. HOLDEN.

H.R. 3596: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. NEAL.

H.R. 3627: Ms. MATSUI and Mr. MORAN.

H.R. 3643: Mr. MARCHANT and Mr. DENT.

H.R. 3661: Mr. BACA, Mr. FILNER, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. HIGGINS, and Mr. BOSWELL.

H.R. 3668: Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. YODER, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. MARINO, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. KELLY, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. ISSA, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. GUTHRIE, and Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 3679: Mr. YARMUTH.

H.R. 3785: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 3790: Mr. ACKERMAN.

H.R. 3803: Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. WEST, Mr. RIGELL, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. BROOKS, and Mr. HURT.

H.R. 3839: Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia and Mr. HEINRICH.

H.R. 3849: Mr. ADERHOLT and Ms. SEWELL.

H.R. 3985: Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 4051: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York and Mr. NUGENT.

H.R. 4052: Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CULBERSON, Ms. CHU, and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 4066: Mr. ROSS of Florida.

H.R. 4070: Mr. SOUTHERLAND.

H.R. 4077: Mr. COSTA.

H.R. 4095: Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia.

H.R. 4124: Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana.

H.R. 4134: Mr. COSTA, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. CARTER, and Mr. TERRY.

H.R. 4155: Mr. MICHAUD.

H.R. 4160: Mr. ROE of Tennessee.

H.R. 4192: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 4202: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. ROSS of Arkansas, and Mr. SHERMAN.

H.R. 4210: Mr. BUTTERFIELD and Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 4227: Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. BISHOP of New York.

H.R. 4229: Mr. CLARKE of Michigan, Mr. CANSECO, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. WALDEN, and Mr. FINCHER.

H.R. 4235: Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 4256: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 4269: Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 4271: Mr. HEINRICH and Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 4295: Mrs. MYRICK.

H.R. 4323: Mr. GRIMM.

H.R. 4327: Mr. BENISHEK.

H.R. 4342: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 4362: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. RIVERA, and Mr. GALLEGLY.

H.R. 4367: Mr. QUIGLEY and Mr. LANKFORD.

H.R. 4377: Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas and Mr. POE of Texas.

H.R. 4402: Mr. BISHOP of Utah.

H.R. 4471: Mr. TERRY, Mr. LANCE, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. HARPER, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, and Mr. SULLIVAN.

H.R. 4480: Mr. HARPER.

H.R. 4643: Mr. LONG and Mr. NEAL.

H.R. 4816: Mr. KEATING and Ms. MATSUI.

H.R. 4818: Mr. SOUTHERLAND.

H.R. 4933: Ms. BALDWIN.

H.R. 5303: Mr. WALSH of Illinois.

H.R. 5331: Mr. HONDA, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. STARK, and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.

H.R. 5542: Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 5615: Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 5646: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. CANSECO, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. LATTA, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mr. JONES.

H.R. 5684: Mr. RANGEL and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 5707: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 5710: Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina.

H.R. 5713: Mr. JONES.

H.R. 5719: Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 5738: Mr. DINGELL.

H.R. 5740: Ms. WATERS.

H.R. 5741: Ms. BERKLEY and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 5748: Mr. MORAN.

H.R. 5750: Mr. DEUTCH.

H.J. Res. 13: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.J. Res. 45: Mr. MCINTYRE.

H.J. Res. 47: Mr. HOYER.

H.J. Res. 81: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.

H.J. Res. 108: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H. Con. Res. 101: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.

H. Con. Res. 122: Mr. BARTON of Texas and Mr. MARCHANT.

H. Res. 25: Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana and Mr. MATHESON.

H. Res. 134: Mr. KEATING and Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H. Res. 282: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H. Res. 298: Mr. COOPER.
H. Res. 568: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.
H. Res. 604: Mr. BARTON of Texas.
H. Res. 609: Mr. ELLISON.
H. Res. 618: Mr. NADLER and Mr. PETERSON.
H. Res. 644: Mr. STIVERS.
H. Res. 647: Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Ms. BERKLEY.
H. Res. 650: Mr. BLUMENAUER and Mr. TIERNEY.
H. Res. 654: Ms. CHU, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

The amendment to be offered by Representative MCKEON to H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

DELETION OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

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

H.R. 4103: Mr. BENISHEK.
H. Con. Res. 107: Mr. GRIJALVA.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, petitions and papers were laid on the clerk's desk and referred as follows:

44. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the City of Lauderdale Lakes, Florida, relative to Resolution No. 2012-38 expressing condolences to the family of Trayvon Martin; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

45. Also, a petition of the Town of New Shoreham, Rhode Island, relative to Resolution condemning in no uncertain terms Section 1021 of the 2012 NDAA; jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Affairs.

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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, sustainer of us all, give today to our Senators reverence to realize Your presence, humility to know their own needs, trust to ask You for help, and obedience to accept Your guidance. Remind us all that all great things have their price.

May we remember that there is no purity without vigilance, no friendship without loyalty, no joy without service, and no crown without a cross. Help us to be willing to pay the price that we may enter into our reward.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUYE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUYE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

STOP THE STUDENT LOAN INTEREST RATE HIKE ACT OF 2012—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 365, S. 2343.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to calendar No. 365, S. 2343, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for Federal Direct Stafford Loans, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, following my remarks and those, if any, of the Republican leader, the Senate will begin debate on several motions to proceed to Republican budget resolutions. Consent was asked last night, I am quite sure, that the first hour be equally divided between the two leaders, with the majority controlling the first half and Republicans the final half. That is already done?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. REID. There will be up to 6 hours of debate on the motions to proceed to the budget resolutions. Senators should expect five rollcall votes around 4 p.m. if all time is used, and it probably will be.

MEASURE PLACED ON CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, S. 3187 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3187) to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to revise and extend the user-fee programs for prescription drugs and medical devices, to establish user-fee programs for generic drugs and biosimilars, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill shall be placed on the calendar.

OBSTRUCTIONISM

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is almost universally acknowledged that Republican obstructionism has reached new heights in the Senate. There are separate articles written about it. There are even now books written about it. Democrats would have to break a filibuster, I guess, to declare the sky blue or the Earth round, and passing the most commonsense and consensus legislation could take weeks or months. So with a mile-long list to do, we can't afford to waste any time. Yet today Republicans will force the Senate to waste a day on a series of political show votes. We will spend hours debating and voting on a handful of nonbinding budget resolutions even though we already have a legally binding budget. If one of the Republicans' budgets passed—which it won't—by law, it is nonbinding. We have a binding budget resolution.

The Senate could spend the day passing tax cuts for small businesses that grow and hire people or even legislation to keep the Food and Drug Administration running. We could be considering the Paycheck Fairness Act, ensuring American women receive equal pay for equal work. We could be debating cybersecurity legislation, and the Pentagon says the No. 1 issue facing this country today is cyber-insecurity. We could be working on a farm bill. Senators STABENOW and ROBERTS have done such an outstanding job saving the country $23 billion and reducing the debt by that much. We should be on that bill. We could be protecting 7 million students from rate hikes on their Federal loans. We could even move a

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series of appropriations bills to implement the budget we have already enacted. Instead, we will debate and vote on a series of stunt budgets.

Republicans aren't interested in getting anything done this year. They have said so from the very beginning. Their leader, my friend from Kentucky, has said the No. 1 issue is to defeat President Obama. So they don't mind wasting a day of the Senate's time on useless political show votes.

Republicans can say over and over that they are only forcing votes on four Republican budgets today because Democrats failed to pass their own budget. That couldn't be further from the truth. In August Congress passed and President Obama signed a budget that reduces the deficit by more than $2 trillion. It is called the Budget Control Act. Twenty-eight Republican Senators, including my friend the minority leader, voted for that last legally binding budget. But since August those Republicans have developed a case of amnesia. Why else would they walk around Washington claiming we don't have a budget? And unlike the hollow Republican budget resolutions the Senate will waste the day debating, the Budget Control Act actually has the force of law. If Republicans were serious about reducing the deficit, they wouldn't be working so hard to undo that August law, which cuts more than $2 trillion from the deficit.

Democrats agree that the across-the-board cuts to domestic spending and defense programs—agreed to in the Budget Control Act—aren't the ideal way to solve our Nation's fiscal problems. But the cuts were designed to be tough so lawmakers were forced to reach a balanced deal. Unfortunately, Republicans refuse to be reasonable. They refuse to raise even a penny of new revenue or ask millionaires to contribute their fair share to help reduce our deficit. And Democrats won't agree to a one-sided solution that lets the superwealthy off the hook while forcing the middle class to bear all the hardship. The American people agree with this.

These four stunt budgets all take that one-sided approach, which protects wealthy special interests at the expense of ordinary Americans, and they clearly illuminate the Republicans' priorities—to shower the wealthy with tax breaks paid for by the middle class. All four of the Republican plans cut investments that help middle-class families get back on their feet in order to increase tax breaks for businesses that ship jobs overseas. All four plans would double the student loan rate. It would put colleges out of reach for many students in order to protect tax loopholes for special interests. All four plans end Medicare as we know it, gutting seniors' health benefits to lavish more tax breaks on millionaires and billionaires.

Yesterday the Senate showed it is possible to advance policies that improve our economy and put Americans back to work as long as Democrats and Republicans work together. On an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote yesterday, we passed the Export-Import Bank reauthorization that will support 300,000 jobs during the next year, and these jobs will help American companies sell their products overseas. But every moment we waste refighting old battles or revisiting Republicans' failed economic policies is time that could be better spent creating jobs. The time for show votes is over. Now it is time for the Senate to get back to work putting Americans back to work.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

THE BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, before I was Republican leader, I was probably best known as a lonely warrior against campaign finance reform on the grounds that it violates the first amendment right to free speech. Before that, I was probably best known—at least in some quarters—for an ad that I ran in my first Senate campaign that featured a pack of bloodhounds running around looking for my opponent, who had missed so many votes giving paid speeches around the country that we thought we should call him out on it. Well, I can't help but think back on that ad when it comes to Senate Democrats and the Federal budget. Where in the world is it? Where is the budget?

We have a nearly $16 trillion debt. We are borrowing more than 40 cents of every dollar we spend. Entitlements are going broke. Millions are out of work. And Senate Democrats can't even put a plan on a piece of paper so we can have a vote. What are they doing over there? What are they doing?

Isn't anybody over there embarrassed by the fact that they haven't offered a budget in 3 years? It has been 3 years since the Democrat-led Senate felt it needed to put a budget together so the American people can see what their priorities are and what they plan to do to fix this mess, 3 years in which they have completely abdicated their responsibility as the majority party to show the American people what they stand for, to put their vision in black and white for all the world to see. The fact is they don't have it. They don't have a budget.

As far as I can tell, their only plan is to take shots at our plans and hope nobody notices that they don't have one of their own. They are so unserious, they won't even vote for a budget that was written by a President of their own party. It doesn't get more irresponsible than that.

I think Treasury Secretary Geithner summed it up pretty well when he was asked a few months ago what the administration planned to do to address entitlements—the single biggest driver of the national debt. Here is what the Secretary of the Treasury had to say:

We're not coming before you today to say we have a definite solution to that long-term problem. What we do know is, we don't like yours.

You have to give the guy points for candor—no plan of his own, but he doesn't like ours. What breathtaking disregard for the problems we face.

So if you are looking for a simple three-word description of the Democratic approach to the problems we face, it is this: Duck and cover. Duck and cover. They don't have a budget of their own. They are going to vote against their own President's budget later today, in all likelihood, and they are going to vote against every budget Republicans put up.

Now, the majority leader has tried to get around all this by suggesting that the Budget Control Act we negotiated last fall should count as a budget since it sets the top-line amount we are going to spend. But he knows as well as I do that is not a budget. A budget is a list of priorities. It reflects your values as a party. It shows the tough choices you are willing to make. It is not just dollar figures, it is a vision. It is the responsibility of any majority party to put one together, to stand and be counted. But since Democrats refuse to do their duty by the Nation, Republicans will attempt to do it for them.

Later today we will vote on five different budget proposals: the President's, Congressman PAUL RYAN's, Senator PAT TOOMEY's, Senator PAUL's, and Senator MIKE LEE's. We will give Democrats a choice and see if they have the courage to get behind any of these proposals—or none of them—and we will learn a lot in the process.

By the end of the day we will know whether there is a budget that Washington Democrats support, and the American people will know without a doubt who is voting for solutions in this town and who isn't. They will know who has a plan to fix the mess we are in and who doesn't. They will know who would rather spend their time criticizing others than doing the hard work of setting priorities and making choices.

Senate Democrats do not want to explain how they will fix the fiscal mess we are in. They do not want to say how they will preserve and strengthen entitlements. What they want to do is complain about others. They are putting their desire for campaign material ahead of their responsibility to govern.

The tragedy is every year they do so, the problems we face only get worse. The debt gets bigger, entitlements get closer to insolvency, and the American people have to go another year wondering when things will ever change.

Some people up here think it is time to do something now and we will know who those people are by their votes.

Madam President, I now ask the Chair execute the order with respect to the five motions to proceed to the budget resolutions provided for under the order.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

S. CON. RES. 41, H. CON. RES. 112, S. CON. RES. 37, S. CON. RES. 42, S. CON. RES. 44 EN BLOC—MOTIONS TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following concurrent resolutions, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motions to proceed to Calendar No. 357, S. Con Res. 41; Calendar No. 354, H. Con. Res. 112; Calendar No. 356, S. Con. Res. 37; Calendar No. 384, S. Con. Res. 42; Calendar No. 395, S. Con. Res. 44.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 6 hours of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans controlling the second 30 minutes.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, this is a consequential discussion today. It is a question of the future economic policy of the United States. That is what we are talking about here today. I just heard the Republican leader say there is no budget. I don't know how to say this, but sometimes I wonder if colleagues pay attention to what they are voting on here. Last year in August we did not pass a budget resolution; instead, we passed a budget law.

Anybody who has had 10th grade civics knows a law is stronger than any resolution. A resolution is purely a congressional document. It never goes to the President for his signature. A law has to pass both bodies and be signed by the President. Last year, instead of a budget resolution, we did a budget law called the Budget Control Act.

The Budget Control Act set the budget for the next 2 years, for this year and next. More than that, it set 10 years of spending caps, saving $900 billion. In addition, the Budget Control Act gave a special committee the authority to reform the tax system and the entitlement system of the country, and it said: If you come to an agreement, special committee, your action cannot be filibustered. You have to go right to the floor for a vote. And if you do not agree, there will be an additional $1.2 trillion of spending cuts put in place.

The special committee did not agree, so that additional $1.2 trillion of spending cuts is now the law, in addition to the $900 billion of spending cuts. That is a total spending cut package of more than $2 trillion. That is the biggest spending cut package in the history of the United States. For our colleagues to say there are no spending limits in place—really? What is the Budget Control Act, then? It is a law passed overwhelmingly in the Senate. It passed in the House. It was signed by the President of the United States.

Why are they engaged in this diversion? I think I know why. Because the last time our colleagues on the other side were in control, when they had it all, the House, the Senate, the White House—from 2001 to 2006 they had both Houses of Congress, until 2008 they had the White House, so of course nothing could be changed in terms of the policies they put in place until we had a new President. And what happened when they had total control and their policies were in place? Republican policies led the United States to the brink of financial collapse. That is what happened. Do you know what they want to do now? They want to go back to those failed policies and do it all over again.

We cannot let them do that. That would be a disaster for this country. It would be a disaster for the world's economy. I do not know what could be more clear than when their policies were in place they brought this Nation to the brink of financial collapse. I remember those days. I remember being called to a special meeting in this building with the leaders of the House and the Senate and the head of the Treasury Department under President Bush and the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, who told us if they did not take certain actions the next day there would be a financial collapse in the United States within days. I was in the room when the rescue for the major financial institutions in this country was designed and we were told, late on a Saturday night, if we did not reach agreement by the next day the Asian markets would open Sunday night and they would collapse and our markets would open the next Monday and they would collapse.

Barack Obama was not the President; George W. Bush was the President. The Republican economic policies had been put in place in 2001, in 2002, in 2003, and those policies were still in place when we came close to collapse. We do not forget.

Let's go back to what happened with the private sector jobs picture. At the end of the Bush administration we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. Now we are gaining 130,000 in the last month. In the months before that, immediately preceding, we were gaining about 200,000 jobs a month. We have had a gain, now that the economy has started to turn around under this President, of 4 million jobs created in the private sector.

There it is. The red line is the results of the last time the Republicans controlled the policy here—job losses every month. Finally, under this President things have begun to turn around. Instead of losing jobs we are gaining jobs, and the same is true on economic growth. On economic growth the record is very clear. In the last quarter of the Bush administration the economy was shrinking at a rate of almost 9 percent. You can see it there, that long red bar—the economy in the last quarter of the Bush administration shrinking at a rate of almost 9 percent. But that, too, has turned around under this new President and we are now averaging economic growth of about 3 percent—a dramatic improvement.

But our Republican friends are not satisfied. They want to take us back. They want to take us back to those failed policies that had the economy shrinking at a rate of 9 percent, had us losing 800,000 jobs a month. We are not going to support that. We are going to oppose that. One thing the Republican leader got right is we are going to be voting against going back to those failed policies that put this economy in the ditch, that put us on the brink of financial collapse. He is absolutely right. We are going to oppose that.

Our policies have begun to turn things in the right direction. Here are the positive signs for the U.S. economy: 26 consecutive months of private sector job growth; 11 consecutive quarters of real GDP growth; unemployment rate down; manufacturing has expanded for 33 consecutive months; consumer confidence is showing signs of improvement—in fact, the last consumer confidence reading is at a 4-year high; U.S. auto manufacturers that were on the brink of bankruptcy under the Bush administration policies, the Republican policies, are now returning to profitability; and State revenues are showing signs of improvement.

One way we can reality-test is how is our economy doing compared to our major competitors. How are we doing compared to the Europeans? How are we doing compared to Japan? How are we doing compared to the United Kingdom? On every one of those tests the United States comes out on top. Our economy is performing better than the European zone—all the European countries combined. We are doing better than Japan. We are doing better than the United Kingdom. This chart shows the story. Our economic growth is the best, compared to our major competitors.

If there is any doubt that Republican policies had us on the brink of financial collapse, we can look to the study that was done by Alan Blinder, the former Deputy Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and Mark Zandi, who advised the McCain campaign on economic policy. The two of them did an analysis of the Federal actions taken to deal with the fiscal crisis and the financial crisis. Here is what they conclude:

We find that its effects on real GDP, jobs and inflation are huge, and probably averted what could have been called Great Depression 2.0.

When our friends attack the President and say he did not lead—really? He averted a depression. He prevented a financial collapse, because that is exactly where we were headed when the Republicans were in control.

Zandi and Blinder went on to write:

When all is said and done, the financial and fiscal policies will have cost taxpayers a substantial sum, but not nearly as much as most had feared and not nearly as much as if policymakers had not acted at all. If the comprehensive policy responses saved the

economy from another depression, as we estimate, they were well worth their cost.

That is exactly right. But what do our colleagues on the other side want to do? They want to take us to extreme austerity. They want to slam on the brakes, even while this economy is in a fragile recovery. We do not have to wonder what would happen if we adopted the policies they are presenting here on the floor of the Senate today. We do not have to imagine it; we can just look across to Europe because they are pursuing the policies that our colleagues on the other side advocate here today. What is happening? We have kind of an experiment going on because what our Republican friends are pushing for is being done in Europe. What are they experiencing? Here is a column from the former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, ''Austerity Is Strangling Europe.''

[T]he direction of European economic and financial policy must change, away from pure austerity toward growth. Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Italy and Spain have made substantial progress in stabilizing their finances. But the economic and political situation in these countries shows that austerity alone is not the way to resolve the crisis.

Do we have a problem with debt? Absolutely. Do we need to deal with it? Absolutely. I was part of the Bowles-Simpson commission. I was part of the group of six. I have spent hundreds of hours negotiating with colleagues on both sides to get a result. But the answer is not extreme austerity right now. Almost every economic analyst says if you do that you will slam this country right back into recession. Again, we do not have to look very far to find out if that is true, because Great Britain has tried that approach. What have they experienced? Here is an article from the Wall Street Journal on April 26: ''U.S. Slips Back Into Recession.''

That is exactly the formula that is being presented by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle today. Let's slam on the brakes. We are going to put this thing right back in recession. Hey, they had their chance. They ran the economic policy of this country for 8 years under the Bush administration, and sure enough they had this country on the brink of financial collapse. Now they want to return to those same failed policies. What a mistake that would be.

We have heard the Republican leader say there is no budget; we have no budget. As I indicated in the beginning of my remarks, we do have a budget law that was passed last year. It is called the Budget Control Act. Let me read from the Budget Control Act because maybe my colleagues missed it when they were voting on it. Here is what it says in two places:

The allocations, aggregates, and levels

Referring to spending levels—

set in subsection (b)(1) shall apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2012.

Is that confusing? It says ''in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2012.''

The identical language is repeated for 2013:

The allocations, aggregates, and levels set in subsection (b)(2) shall apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2013.

That is about as clear as it can be. I might add, the Budget Control Act, as I indicated earlier, is stronger than any resolution because a resolution is purely a congressional document. It never goes to the President for his signature. So the Budget Control Act that set the budget for 2012 and 2013 has the force of law, unlike a budget resolution that is not signed by the President.

The Budget Control Act also sets spending limits not just for 2 years but for 10 years. It caps spending for 10 years, saving $900 billion. It also provided the full enforcement mechanisms, including a deeming resolution that allowed budget points of order to be enforced for the appropriations bills that come in 2012 and 2013.

The Budget Control Act did something else. It created a supercommittee, a reconciliation-like procedure to address entitlement reform and tax reform backed up by a $1.2 trillion so-called sequester. ''Sequester'' is just a fancy word for more spending cuts.

The Budget Control Act that is the law said if the special committee didn't reform the tax system, didn't reform the entitlement system, that there would be another $1.2 trillion of spending cuts imposed on top of the $900 billion. We all know the special committee didn't reach an agreement, so that additional $1.2 trillion of spending cuts is in place. That is a total of $2 trillion in spending cuts. That is the biggest spending cut package in the history of the United States.

For our friends on the other side to say there are no spending limits in place is just wrong. It is just wrong. We do have a problem. We have a big problem. This chart talks about the spending and revenue of the country over the last 60 years and tells us why we have a problem. The red line shows the spending in the United States over that period. The green line shows the revenues. We can see on the chart there is a big gap between the spending and the revenue, and that is why we have deficits.

Our friends on the other side like to refer to one part of the equation. They just like to talk about spending. But the reality is deficits are created by the gap between the revenue and the spending. We can see on this chart we are at or near a 60-year high on spending. We have come off the 60-year high a little bit, and we are at or near a 60-year low on revenue. We have to work both sides of the equation. Again, we are at or near a 60-year high on the spending, and we are at or near a 60-year low on revenue.

So what is to be done about it? The public says we ought to have a balanced plan: 62 percent say the best way to reduce the Federal budget deficit is a combination of additional revenue and spending cuts. Eight percent say we ought to just increase taxes. Seventeen percent say just cut programs.

I was part of the so-called Bowles-Simpson Commission. There were 18 of us; 11 of the 18 supported the conclusions that called for that kind of approach—additional revenue but also additional spending cuts. That is what the American people say we ought to do, but that is not what our friends on the other side are proposing. They propose additional tax cuts, to dig the hole deeper before we start filling it in.

Then they say: In addition to that, we will have Draconian spending cuts because if we are going to have more tax cuts that primarily go to the wealthiest among us, and we are trying to reduce the deficit, that means we have to have even more spending cuts.

Let me just say that the budgets our Republican friends are going to be offering today have something in common. Every one of them ends Medicare as we know it. Every Republican budget offered today ends Medicare as we know it. One of the Republican budgets being offered today cuts Social Security by 39 percent. That is their answer. If we are going to have more tax cuts for the wealthiest among us—and many of them are not paying their fair share of taxes—and if we are going to give them additional tax cuts, trillions of dollars in some cases in these budgets they are presenting today, then how are we going to make it up? Their answer is end Medicare as we know it, and that is in every one of their budgets.

One of them has gone so far as to say: Let's cut Social Security benefits 39 percent. We will be voting on that later today, and we will see who stands behind that proposal.

Every Republican budget cuts taxes for millionaires by at least $150,000 a year. Are you listening? Every Republican budget being offered today cuts taxes for millionaires by at least $150,000 a year on average.

Every Republican budget being offered today protects offshore tax havens.

What are offshore tax havens? This is a picture of a building down in the Cayman Islands. It is an Ugland House. It is a little five-story building down in the Cayman Islands. That building claims to be the home of 18,857 companies, and they all say they are doing business out of that little building down in the Cayman Islands—18,857 companies.

They are not doing business out of that building. They are doing monkey business out of that building, and the monkey business they are doing is avoiding the taxes they owe in the United States.

Every Republican budget protects those offshore tax havens. The first House Republican budget plan we will be voting on today is totally unbalanced. There is no revenue. In fact, it

is a lot more tax cuts, $1 trillion of additional tax cuts for the wealthiest in our country. They do cut some things other than taxes; they cut health care by almost $3 trillion. They shift Medicare to a voucher system which will end Medicare as we know it. They block-grant for Medicaid, going right after the most vulnerable in our society: children, the disabled, and those who have the least. They cut the safety net for seniors, children, the disabled, which will increase the number of uninsured by more than 30 million. They have large cuts to education, energy, and infrastructure. Cutting education doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me. Talk about eating your seed corn, that is it.

After our House Republican colleagues put out their budget, the Catholic bishops said this in the Washington Post: Bishops say Ryan budget fails moral test.

The House Republican budget authored by Mr. RYAN fails the moral test. It certainly does.

Let's go to the next slide. This plan cuts discretionary spending $1 trillion beyond what the Budget Control Act did. If you look at priorities, it kind of leaps out at you. Health care is cut by almost $3 trillion. It goes from $12.7 trillion to $9.9 trillion.

Then we go to the question of education, where the United States is already lagging. In fact, the United States ranks 25th out of 34 OECD countries in math. We are 25th in math. In science we are 17th out of 34. So we are 25th out of 34 in math, and we are 17th out of 34 in science. The budget from the House Republicans says to cut education by 25 percent; cut it from $77 billion to $58 billion. That is a 25-percent cut in education under the House Republican plan.

We have all seen gasoline prices rising. We are thankful they have been easing back in recent days. But, nonetheless, on May 14 gasoline averaged $3.75 a gallon. What is the Republican answer to rising gasoline prices? Well, let's cut those energy programs that are designed to reduce our dependence on foreign energy. Let's cut them 60 percent. That is what the House Republican plan does. It cuts programs to reduce our dependence on foreign energy from $4.7 billion a year to $2 billion. That is a 60-percent cut in programs to reduce our dependence on foreign energy.

If anybody has driven on the highways of America, we all know we have work to do there. If we look at spending on infrastructure in our country versus our major competitors, we can see China is spending 9 percent of its GDP on infrastructure: roads, bridges, airports, and rail. Europe spends 5 percent, and the United States spends 2.4 percent on infrastructure. We ought to do better than that.

So what is the Republican answer? On transportation funding, they cut it 34 percent. They cut it 34 percent. I think we understand the direction our Republican colleagues want to take this country, and it is full speed in reverse. They want to go back to the failed policies that put this country on the brink of financial collapse the last time they were in charge.

We will hear our colleagues on the Republican side say we can't raise any revenue. We can't raise any revenue, even though revenue is at or near a 60-year low right now. If we look historically at what it has taken to balance the budget, the last five times we balanced the budget, revenue was at 19.5 percent to 20.6 percent of GDP. Under the Republican plan, it never gets above 18.7 percent. So I don't think they are very serious about balancing the budget.

Former Senate Budget Committee Chairman Judd Gregg said this about the need for more revenue:

> [W]e also know revenues are going to have to go up, if you're going to maintain a stable economy and a productive economy, because of the simple fact that you're going to have this huge generation that has to be paid for.

That is the baby boom generation.

Former Senate Budget Committee Chairman Domenici also said we need more revenue. He said:

> A complete deficit reduction plan—one that can gain support from Republicans and Democrats—will need to combine comprehensive spending cuts with structural entitlement reform and new revenues . . . [A]dditional revenues will be needed if we are serious about controlling our debt.

One of the issues that has become more and more clear in recent months is that income disparity is widening in America. This shows, since 1979, what has happened to the top 1 percent in terms of their income and what has happened to the middle quintile and the lowest quintile. Everybody else has been pretty much stagnant since 1979. The top 1 percent has gone up like a rocket. I have nothing to be critical about in terms of people doing well. We want everyone to succeed, not just part of the population.

The hard reality is that since 1995, the effective tax rate for the wealthiest 400 taxpayers in this country has been cut from about 30 percent to 18 percent. That is not fair. The Republican plan is to give them more tax cuts. In fact, the House Republican plan on revenue provides an additional $1 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthiest among us by giving millionaires an average tax cut of more than $150,000 a year. It does not contribute one dime of revenue to deficit reduction.

I want to end where I began. The last time our colleagues on the other side were in charge, when they controlled everything here from 2001 to 2006 and the White House until 2008, their Republican policies led the United States to the brink of financial collapse. The proposals they are making here today are to take us right back to those failed policies. We shouldn't let them do that. That would be a mistake for our country and it would be a mistake for the world.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, the fundamental question we as a Nation have to ask is: What are we going to do now? What are we going to do for the future? What is our plan for the future? The problem we have in this Senate is that the Democratic majority steadfastly and adamantly refuses to lay out their vision for the future while investing a considerable amount of time and effort in attacking anybody who does. They even voted down their own President's budget, as bad as it is—the most irresponsible budget ever submitted here, in my opinion.

This is an odd situation we are in, and I will say that our country has never been in more danger financially. Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson—Senator CONRAD served on their committee—came before the Budget Committee, of which I am the ranking member, and told us in a signed statement—that this Nation has never faced a more predictable financial crisis. In other words, the course we are on today is unsustainable. They told us that. They told us it could happen within as little as 2 years, and that was over a year ago that they gave that testimony.

We are in the danger zone financially. I know a lot of people would like to say it is not so, but it is so. Look at this chart. This chart shows the total debt of the eurozone, including the U.K., and the United States. Our debt exceeds that of the eurozone. We have a larger debt than they do. My good friend Senator CONRAD, who is such a fine person, noted that President Bush presided over a period in which our debt increased, and it did increase. The largest debt President Bush ever had was $480 billion in 1 year, which was too large. President Obama has never had a budget that was less than a $1,200 billion deficit, and next year it will be over $1,000 billion again, according to expert testimony. We are on an unsustainable path. So I would note that our $15.5 trillion debt for the United States is greater than the eurozone and the eurozone has a larger population than we do.

Let's look at this chart, which drives that number home again, in case anybody is worried about it. I am. It shows the average debt per person in the countries we have been reading about that are in financial trouble, and it hits them sometimes surprisingly, and we never know quite how it is going to hit. But look at this: The debt in Spain, which we know is in a rocky financial position, is $18,000 per person; Portugal, $19,000; France, $33,000; Greece, $38,000—Greece's debt per person is $38,000, whereas the United States is $44,000. Yes, we have a little larger economy, but this is the danger zone.

A few people were saying we could have a financial problem in 2007 as a result of the bubble in housing. They

warned us that might happen. A lot of people said: Oh, no, not this time; it is different; we have it under control. Yet we had a financial crisis that we haven't recovered from yet. So I would say we do need to take action.

We do not have a budget. If we have a budget, why did President Obama comply with the United States Code and submit a budget this year? If we have a budget, why did the House pass a budget? If we have a budget, why did four different Democratic Congressmen and groups of Congressmen submit budgets in the House? If we have a budget, why did Senator CONRAD seek to have a budget markup in the committee? He basically said: Well, we may not bring it up on the floor, but the law says we should have a budget and I am going to bring one up in committee. The day before the committee met, the Democrats met in conference and told him not to do it.

So we were expecting to have an actual markup of a budget presented by the Democratic leadership and we didn't get it. Why? Senator REID said it would be foolish to have a budget—foolish. What did he mean by that? Why would the Democratic leader, attacking Republicans this morning, say it is foolish for us to produce a budget? Well, he said that because he meant it would be foolish politically. It would be not smart politically because the Democratic leadership in the Senate would have to lay out a vision for the future and the vision they wanted to sell and could agree on was one the American people wouldn't like. It wouldn't be smart. They would reject it. We would add the numbers up and see how much they actually want to increase taxes, how much they are going to increase the debt, how much spending is going to increase. That is not leadership. It is an utter failure of leadership.

In contrast, the Republican House produced a budget that changes the debt course of America. It puts us on a sound financial path. One can agree with it or disagree with it. We will have other budgets offered today from the Republican side that will have substantial support, that will change the debt course we are on, balance the budget in a certain number of years, and put us on a sound financial path. I expect every one of those budgets to be opposed by every Member on the other side of the aisle. Again, it appears they will unanimously vote down President Obama's budget and not offer one of their own, directly contrary to the law.

I know the majority leader this morning said: Well, filibuster is our problem. But we can't filibuster a budget. The Congressional Budget Act is designed to ensure that a budget will be passed. The Congressional Budget Act does not allow a filibuster. Only 51 votes are needed to pass a budget, so why is it being mentioned? Because they prefer to hide under the table and not stand up and be counted and not address the greatest trouble this Nation has, which is our debt.

I see some of my colleagues here today, and I ask unanimous consent to participate in a colloquy with my colleagues for up to 20 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I see Senator BLUNT here, who was part of the leadership in the House before he came to the Senate. I know he has a deep understanding of these issues and the place we are in as a Nation today. I also see Senator THUNE from South Dakota, who is an active member of the Budget Committee and part of the leadership here in the Senate.

I am pleased to yield to Senator BLUNT and ask him how he feels this morning as we move forward today to bring up a series of budgets with no plan from the majority party in the Senate.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I am embarrassed that we are not serious about this issue. Senator THUNE and I served in the House together while the Senator from Alabama was leading in these budget fights in the Senate, and we had a budget every year. We didn't always every single year have a budget the House and the Senate could agree on, but the House always had a budget and the Senate always had a budget. We always complied with the 1974 Budget Act that says we have to have a budget. It says we have to have a budget by April 15.

Frankly, we can't do our work without a budget. We can't get spending under control without a budget. We can't appropriate the way we should without a budget because the budget sets forth how much money we are willing to spend on defense and how much money we are willing to spend on military construction and how much money we are willing to spend on energy. If we don't have that, we don't have a starting place.

I have all the respect in the world for our friend from North Dakota, Senator CONRAD, but to be the chairman of the Budget Committee and to have to come to the floor and talk about what is wrong with the other budgets that have been produced when his committee hasn't produced one has to be frustrating for him, no matter how effective he seemed when he was talking about what was wrong with the people who had a plan. It is easy to find out what is wrong with somebody's plan, particularly when one doesn't have any obligation, apparently, on their own part to come up with a plan.

We remember when the White House was asked a few weeks ago, when Senator REID said the Senate will not have a budget and what their position on that was, they said: We don't have a position on that.

The President submitted a budget. Why did the President submit a budget if he doesn't want the Congress to act on a budget? The House voted on his budget this year. It was 414 to 0. Not a single Democrat or Republican in the House voted for the President's budget. Last year we voted on the President's budget, as I assume we will again today. Not a single Democrat or Republican voted for the President's budget last year, and the position of the White House is they don't care. It is an amazing situation to find ourselves in.

Whoever is in charge of the Senate in the future needs to have a commitment to the American people that we are going to have a budget, we are going to have an appropriations process, and we are going to get this spending under control. We have maxed out the credit card; everybody gets that. The Senator from Alabama showed this morning with his chart the figures representing our debt relative to the countries we sort of laugh at, how irresponsible they are—numbers that I think we ought to look at pretty carefully. When our debt per person is greater than the Greek debt per person—I haven't seen the front page of a paper in a while that didn't have something about chaos in Greece on it because they have let their government get bigger than their economy can support. They have let their debt get bigger than the gross domestic product of their country by almost two times, but now we have exceeded our debt by—our debt exceeds our potential to produce goods and services in a year for the first time ever. In fact, in the 3 years we haven't had a budget, the debt of the country has increased almost $5 trillion, as we have spent over $10 trillion in those 3 years without a budget. It is unacceptable. Everybody here knows it is unacceptable. And every American family, frankly, who thinks about it knows it is unacceptable.

The Senator's fight, along with what I am sure has to be Chairman CONRAD's frustration to not have a budget, could not be a more important topic for us to be talking about today or for the American people to be asking the question: Why not? Why are you refusing to do your job? I know nobody in this Chamber knows as much about the budget, in my opinion, as the Senator does. Your frustration of where this does not allow us to go to do the right things is as great as anybody's, maybe greater than anybody's. But I think all of us know we should be doing the right thing here, which is to obey the law, create a budget, and have a budget that gets us to the place we know we need to get to, where our economy, once again, is right-sized to our government or, more importantly, our government is right-sized to our economy.

Mr. SESSIONS. Briefly, before I go to Senator THUNE and get him engaged in this discussion, based on the Senator's experience in the budgetary process, I'm sure he is aware that about 60 percent of Federal spending is mandatory entitlement spending. Does the Senator think we can develop a long-term plan for the future that fails to address that large portion that is growing faster than the other part of the budget?

Mr. BLUNT. No, we cannot. Last year, for the first time ever, all of the money that came in was less than the money that went out automatically to these programs, where, if you meet the definition for the program, you get the money. It is at 60 percent now. It has not been that many years ago that it was at 50 percent. It was not that many years before that it was at 40 percent.

So we have to deal with these issues because they lead us to an inevitable place. Do we want to be Europe today a few years from now? Surely not. Surely the answer is no. We cannot avoid that unless we have a plan.

It is easy to talk about how bad the other plan is. But what we all ought to be doing is coming up with a plan that gets us to where we all know we need to be.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Senator.

I thank Senator THUNE for his leadership and active participation in this debate. I ask the Senator, what is on his mind this morning, as we are heading for votes on four different budgets?

Mr. THUNE. I say to my colleague from Alabama, who is the ranking member on the Budget Committee, I got on the Budget Committee in this session of Congress and have been on it now for 2 years. We have not written a budget either year. So it sort of begs the question about whether the committee has any relevance around here anymore.

But to the point about spending and debt—we get down here and we talk about it. I think it has been interesting. The former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mike Mullen—who up until several months ago held that position—would come in front of Congress, in front of congressional committees, and say the greatest threat to America's national security is our national debt. There are a lot of external threats the United States faces. The world continues to be a dangerous place, with al-Qaida and the Iranian nuclear capability and China and North Korea. You can go right down the list. But for the top ranking military official in this country to come before Congress and say the greatest threat to America's national security is our national debt speaks volumes about what our priority ought to be. To think that we here in the Senate now for over 1,100 days have not passed a budget is pretty stunning in light of that reality; and also to say that somehow, because the Budget Control Act last summer passed, we did not need a budget misses the point.

The reason we had the Budget Control Act is because we did not pass a budget. The Budget Control Act is what you get when you do not pass a budget. You end up at the 11th hour having to put something together to deal with the issue of the debt limit, which is what we were dealing with at that time. It did put some caps on spending, but it does not do anything to deal with the long-term structural challenges facing this country, which is what a budget is designed to do.

The President submitted a budget this year, which would suggest he thought we ought to be working on a budget. The chairman of the Budget Committee, as my colleagues have mentioned, even called a Budget Committee markup, where we went there and said: Bring amendments. We went, we brought amendments, and we gave opening statements. We gaveled it out and said we are not going to do it.

So here we are again on the floor of the Senate without a budget, having to vote on other budgets presented by some of our colleagues, the House of Representatives, which passed a budget this year earlier, and the President's budget. To be fair, the President at least submitted a budget. It was a terrible budget if you are looking at the issues of spending and debt. In fact, I think the reason it got voted down 414 to nothing in the House of Representatives is because it added $11 trillion to the debt. It takes our total debt at the end of the 10-year period to $26 trillion and spends $47 trillion over the next 10 years and raises taxes by $2 trillion in a very fragile economy. It was a bad attempt, but at least it was an attempt. It was an attempt that yielded zero votes in the House of Representative, and it will be interesting to see if on the floor of the Senate today there will be any Democrats who will vote for their President's budget proposal.

But the point the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Missouri make is a good one, and that is simply this: We have a responsibility under the law to spell out what we would do to get this country on a more sustainable fiscal path. That is something that is in the budget laws that the Senator from Alabama pointed out. Yet here we go on, year after year after year now—3 years in a row, over 1,100 days—without the Senate doing its job and passing a budget. That is significant for a lot of reasons, not the least of which is this is the fourth year in a row where we are going to have a trillion dollar deficit. Under this administration, you have the highest deficit, the second highest deficit, the third highest deficit, and the fourth highest deficit in history—4 consecutive years now of trillion dollar deficits.

But we are concerned about the economy. We need the economy to get growing again, to expand, to create jobs. That helps address all these things. What is interesting about it—and I know both my colleagues on the floor are well aware of this—there is a lot of research that has been done with regard to developed countries that start carrying these high debt loads. All the analysis suggests when you get a debt-to-GDP ratio of more than 90 percent, it costs you about a point to a point and a half of economic growth every single year. Well, in our country, a percentage point of economic growth means a million jobs. So our debt to GDP—which is now over 100 percent—means it is draining our economy of economic growth and, therefore, lots of jobs.

The Congressional Budget Office said about the President's budget, if his budget were to be enacted, it could cost us up to 2.2 percent of economic growth over the course of the next 10 years, which would amount to 2.2 million jobs. So we know the President's effort was not serious. He did at least put something out there. But we need a serious discussion in the Senate about a budget that will put us on a pathway not only to get spending and debt under control but to allow the economy to grow and expand and get Americans back to work. That is what is at stake here. That is why we believe we ought to have a budget. That is why we are going to have an exercise today where at least we get a chance to vote on some budgets as advanced by some of our colleagues in the House of Representatives as well as here in the Senate and the President's budget.

The fact is, this is the third year in a row where we have not followed the law and gone through the process of getting a budget here on the floor of the Senate. For our colleagues on the other side to suggest it is not necessary simply because the Budget Control Act was passed last summer not only is inconsistent with the law, but it begs the point about why did the President submit his budget, why did they call a Budget Committee markup in the first place? Clearly, somebody around here thinks we ought to be doing our job. But we are not doing it.

So I would hope, as we debate this issue today, at least we will put in front of the American people the arguments we think need to be made with regard to getting spending and debt under control, addressing the long-term, the mandatory side of the budget my colleague from Missouri, Senator BLUNT, mentioned. That is where we know the money is. That is what nobody wants to deal with. We keep squeezing a little bit more out of the discretionary side of the budget. We have to take that on if we are going to save Social Security and Medicare and reform these entitlement programs. That is what a budget process would do. It does not take 60 votes under the law. It takes 51.

To come down here and say Republicans will filibuster again is completely out of whack with what we know to be the facts around here and the law; that is, that it takes 51 votes to pass a budget and a reconciliation bill that could possibly follow.

I appreciate the leadership of my colleague from Alabama as the ranking member on the Budget Committee. I look forward today, at least, for the chance for us to talk about a budget and what we ought to be doing for the future of this country since we do not have a budget on the floor of the Senate.

Mr. SESSIONS. I could not agree with the Senator more. I would note,

the reason we are here today is because a budget was not produced. The Parliamentarian of the Senate ruled that a budget has not been produced and, therefore, under the rules of the Budget Act, budgets that have been filed can be brought to the floor. That is how we were able to force the votes today.

Senator THUNE, briefly—and I will also ask Senator BLUNT, who is in our leadership—isn't it a fact that what happened with the Budget Control Act is that we had spent so much money, we had reached the spending limit of America—the debt ceiling—and we had to have a last-minute effort to reach an agreement; the Republicans insisted that we had to reduce spending, and we got a reduction in spending from $47 trillion over the next 10 years to $45 trillion? You would have thought that was going to bankrupt America—that we would spend $45 trillion instead of $47 trillion.

That is not a budget. It was a limit on spending, and it was done because Republicans said: We are not going to raise the debt limit until you at least cut some spending. That is all that could be accomplished. We avoided a crisis, but it was a pretty tense time.

Senator BLUNT.

Mr. BLUNT. I would like to stay on this. Saying the Budget Control Act is a budget—as Senator THUNE mentioned, if that was the budget, why did the President submit one? Nobody believes that is a budget. The Parliamentarian said it was not a budget. But what it is—it would be as if your family sitting down to decide what money you are going to have to spend this year said: OK, we have X number of dollars. Let's go out and spend it. That is no budget, particularly when you had to borrow 40 percent of the X number of dollars you said you had. We are borrowing 40 percent of the money we are going to spend. The only number we have that we have agreed to is the maximum amount we will spend, knowing we do not have anywhere near that number, and we have not allocated that in any way.

That is no budget. Everybody knows that. Everybody also knows you cannot get there unless you have a way to get there. Your family says: OK, we have done the budgeting for the year. We decided if we borrow almost as much money as we make, and we spend that somewhere, that is our budget. We have not decided where we are going to spend it, we have not decided how we are going to spend it, and we have not even decided a reasonable way we are going to get it, but we said: Here is the number we are going to spend. Now, family, let's all go out and start spending and we will meet here later this year and see how it worked out. It makes no sense at all, and everybody knows that.

Interestingly, we do not hear much about this. It is surprising to me that every day there is not a story about why for the first time ever for 3 years straight now the Senate has decided it does not have to do the work the law requires it to do, as we dig this hole deeper and deeper and deeper. The longer we wait, the more difficult the solution is going to be. Every single day that passes, it is harder to solve this problem than it would have been the day before. Now we have gone 3 years without a budget and apparently we are going to go through the rest of this process without a budget. By the time we get to the end of this year, we will be approaching that fourth year without a budget. It is not as though this would be a good idea, the law says we have to have one. And we should have one.

Mr. SESSIONS. Senator BLUNT has been in the leadership in the House. He is in the leadership of the Senate. Be frank with us. What is it that would cause the majority party not to want to lead, not to want to lay out a plan for the future, and attack anybody who does lay out a plan? I know it is hard. We all know this is a tough thing. But doesn't the Senator think a party that aspires to lead the Senate should, instead of hiding under the table, stand up and say what they believe we should do over the next decade financially?

Mr. BLUNT. I think the law even requires it. I think the leader on the other side, the majority leader, has been pretty clear about it. It is bad politics to have a budget, bad politics to tell the American people officially what we are for, bad politics for our Members to have to go on record saying what they are for.

The President submitted a budget. There are 54 Members of the President's party here in the Senate. Fifty-one of them could pass this budget. It would be the Senate-passed budget. Then you would go to the House and say: OK, let's look at the House budget and the Senate budget and see if we can agree on a budget.

But they actually have been pretty transparent. You have to give them some credit for not trying to be different than they really are. They said: It would be politically foolish for us to pass a budget because then people would know what every one of the 51 of our Members is for, and they would have to say what they are for.

My guess is that nobody in the majority will say they are for anything today—not for the President's budget, not for any budget we will submit. So you go home and say: I am not for any of that. You can't accuse me of being for a bad plan because I am for no plan.

That is where we are.

Mr. SESSIONS. Well, we need revenue—they use that word but will not explicitly say whom they want to tax except a very few rich. The Buffett tax would produce about $4 billion a year when we have a $1,200 billion deficit.

I would note that Senator MANCHIN, a former Governor of West Virginia, said in today's Politico that he would have been impeached if he failed to produce a budget as West Virginia's Governor. He said: Sure I have a problem with failing to offer a budget. As a former Governor, my responsibility was to put a balanced budget forward.

Well, I see my colleague is here. I think our time is up. There might be a couple of minutes for Senator THUNE.

Mr. THUNE. If the Senator will yield for a minute, I assume in Alabama and Missouri and I know in South Dakota our States pass budgets. It can be done. You can balance your budget. It would be nice if we had a requirement in the Constitution that would demand that the way many of our States do. Certainly, there doesn't seem to be the political will here to do it absent that. But it can be done, and hard decisions have to be made. South Dakota went through it last year, made some hard choices, our Governor, our legislature. Those are the types of hard decisions that are going to have to made here, but it takes a certain amount of political will and a willingness to make hard decisions. As the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Missouri have both pointed out, there doesn't seem to be the willingness here to make those hard votes.

As has already been pointed out, the leader on the other side has said: What point is there in doing a budget? And the President of the United States and his folks, when they were asked whether the Senate ought to do a budget, said: Well, we don't have an opinion about that, which I think is really ironic coming from the leader of the free world about whether this country ought to have a budget to work with.

But that being said, as our time winds down here, to argue, as our colleagues have, that we don't need one misses the point. The Parliamentarian has ruled that the Budget Control Act was, in fact, not a budget. We need to do a budget here in the Senate. More importantly, the American people expect it and the taxpayers deserve it. That is why we ought to be having a debate on what we are going to vote for today, not what we are going to vote against.

It will be interesting to see if any of our colleagues on the other side vote for any of the budget proposals we put forward today, including the President of the United States; his budget will be voted on along with several other Republican budgets. I have a feeling we will be for some things. I have a feeling, as you said earlier, that they are not going to be for anything.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, is the time up on this side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the use of calculators be permitted on the Senate floor during consideration of the motions to proceed to budget resolutions.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I wish to go back to the point my colleagues have made. It is fascinating to me. You did not hear them talk for one moment about the substance of their proposals—not a moment. Did you notice that? I wonder why that would be? I think I know. It is because their proposals would take us right back to the failed policies that brought this country to the brink of economic collapse. That is what happened the last time they were in charge. They controlled both bodies from 2001 until 2006, the White House until 2008. So none of those policies they put in place when they controlled both Chambers could be changed. And where were we at the end of 2008? Where were we? We were losing 800,000 jobs a month and the economy was shrinking at a rate of 9 percent. And the proposals they have, the substantive proposals they are making here today, take us right back to those same failed policies.

It is no wonder you did not hear them saying one word about the budget proposals on which we are going to be voting because they are the same failed policies that put this country in the ditch. Instead, what you hear them say is that we on our side have no budget. Fascinating.

Well, let me just put up again what we passed last year in law called the Budget Control Act.

Let me again read from that law. It says:

The allocations, aggregates, and levels—

Spending levels—

in subsection . . . shall apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2012.

In the next clause, it makes the exact same statement for 2013, that the Budget Control Act that was passed last year will serve in the same manner as a budget resolution.

Earlier this year, pursuant to that law, I gave the appropriators, which I am required to do under the law, what they could spend, and here it is. I have this chart being blown up.

Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, $13,397 million; Armed Services, $146,698 million; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, $22,167 million; Commerce, Science, and Transportation, $15,016 million; Energy and Natural Resources, $5,276 million. It sounds kind of like a budget does it not? Doesn't that sound kind of like a budget? Well, guess what, it is a budget. It is in the Budget Control Act that we passed last year instead of a budget resolution.

Again, anybody who has taken high school civics knows a budget law is stronger than any budget resolution. Why would that be the case? Because a budget resolution is purely a congressional document. It never goes to the President for his signature. A budget law, by definition, has to be signed by the President. So last year, instead of a budget resolution, we passed a budget law called the Budget Control Act. Pursuant to that law, I gave the appropriators—earlier this year, before the deadline—their allocations, and I was just reading from them. Finance, $1,337 billion; Foreign Relations, $28,640 million; Homeland Security, $102,276 million; the Judiciary Committee, $18,545 million; Rules and Administration, $41 million. It sounds a lot like a budget doesn't it? Because that is exactly what it provided. It provided the spending limit this year and for next year. That is in the Budget Control Act we passed in the Senate last year on a strong bipartisan vote, passed the House of Representatives, and signed into law by the President of the United States.

So when we hear over and over that there is no budget, no spending limits for this year, it is just not so. There are spending limits for this year. There are spending limits for next year. They are included in the Budget Control Act, which is a law. It was passed. It was signed by the President. That Budget Control Act limited spending for the next 10 years—put spending caps in place. Budget resolutions rarely have spending caps for more than 1 year. The Budget Control Act had 10 years of caps, saving $900 billion. That is the law.

I see the Senator from Michigan is on the floor—a very valued member of the Budget Committee. Welcome to this debate. We have been hearing a lot from the other side—interestingly enough, I want to say to the Senator, almost nothing about the substance of their proposals. I assume that is because they want to go back to the same failed policies that put this country in the ditch we are still digging out of. All they want to talk about is not having a budget resolution—not one word that instead of a budget resolution, we passed a budget law, as the Senator well knows, the Budget Control Act.

How much time will the Senator need?

Ms. STABENOW. I will use 7 minutes or so.

Mr. CONRAD. I will allocate the Senator 10 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the Senator.

Madam President, first let me thank the chairman of the Budget Committee, who I have to say is going to be sorely missed. In fact, I am not sure we are going to let him go. I think we are going to lock the doors to his office and not let him leave. He has been such an incredible valued Member of the Senate and a leader for our country on these issues.

It is absolutely true that what we are really debating is whether we go back to policies that put us in the huge deficit ditch in which we find ourselves or whether we continue to go forward as a country. We need to keep going forward and going forward even more quickly certainly. But in my State, we are seeing us begin to move forward, with manufacturing coming back and innovation opportunities, and we need to continue to push for that.

But let me stress as well what the chairman has said. We passed the Budget Control Act by 74 votes in the Senate—74 votes, a bipartisan vote—on August 2, 2011. It put in place the spending caps the chairman talked about. It laid out something that, frankly, in my time since being here starting in 2001, has been done differently and, frankly, has a stronger basis for it because instead of just having something passed by the House and the Senate, it was actually signed by the President. It is law. It has the force of law, and it is in a situation where it has even more impact than it would normally.

So, yes, we did not do the normal process. What we did was one better than the normal process, which is the Budget Control Act. It did pass. It did put in place the spending caps and set up, as you know, a deficit reduction commission and a requirement on cuts that will take place in January.

It is also true that what we do not have is a long-term plan. As the chairman has talked about over and over again, we have to come together on a long-term deficit reduction plan. So we agree on that. There are many people who have talked about that, worked on various proposals. The President has lead negotiations. Members in this body have. And certainly the chairman of the committee has continued to lead those efforts. And we need to get that done. But in terms of what we have on a budget resolution that puts in place limits or caps, that has been done.

Now, when we look at what is in front of us and the votes we are going to be having today, it is very simple in terms of values. The question is, Are you on the side of the middle class or on the side of millionaires in this country?

You know, folks in my State, the middle class, feel as though the system has been pretty much rigged against them. All they want is a fair shot. We have families in Michigan struggling to make ends meet, and they are struggling to send their kids to college. Over and over again, they look at what is going on here and scratch their heads. And why in the world would we continue to focus on things that help a privileged few, those who have had the most benefits in the last decade? Why do we continue to see policies like these budgets that, in fact, focus on more tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires and ask middle-class families to sacrifice more and more? They shake their heads and say: What is going on here? You guys just do not get it, what is happening to the majority of families.

And what we are seeing once again is that rather than focusing on jobs and bringing the economy back on track, bringing jobs back to the United States, strengthening our ability to make things and grow things in this country, which has to happen if we are going to have a middle class and have an economy, what we see our colleagues on the other side of the aisle do is wanting to double student loan rates

and eliminate Medicare as we know it in order to give another round of tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires. That makes absolutely no sense.

Instead of spending our time passing jobs bills that we need to pass, by the way, including the farm bill, which affects 16 million people in this country when we talk about rural communities and agriculture and food processing and all of our efforts on food policy across the country, instead of doing that, they want to spend their time focusing on something that will give more tax breaks to millionaires and ask middle-class families one more time—just one more time—to sacrifice.

Folks in my State are saying we have had enough of this. What we ought to be doing is our to-do list—stopping outsourcing and rewarding companies that bring jobs home; helping responsible homeowners refinance and take advantage of today's lower interest rates; cutting taxes for small businesses that are creating jobs and investing in their companies; continuing critical investments in clean energy manufacturing for the future; passing a farm bill for 16 million Americans whose jobs rely on agriculture and our rural economy; and we should focus on helping our veterans coming home from the war find good-paying jobs, thanking them for their service.

We have a lot to do. Instead, we are in the same old failed debate that got us in the hole, that got us to the situation where there was a crisis on Wall Street, that got us to the point where we lost millions and millions of jobs in the past. Are we going to go backward or forward? That is the question.

Right now, what are the differences when we look at the four different Republican plans? They are very similar. Here are three basic things that are the same. They all end Medicare as an insurance plan and increase costs by thousands of dollars for seniors in our country, which puts them back in a plan that is before 1964, where seniors would have to try to find private insurance. Of course, as we get older, we all spend more health care dollars; we need more health care, so costs will be higher. It is tougher for older people to find affordable insurance. That is why we created Medicare in 1965. They want to go back prior to that time.

Second, they allow student loan rates to double. All the plans would double the cost of that. I don't know about anybody else, but in Michigan, where we are transforming the economy and going to advanced manufacturing and new technology, we have folks in their forties and fifties going back to school, and we have young people going to college. They are not asking for more expense. The average student debt in Michigan is about $25,000. They are not asking to add to that anymore. All four of these proposals would do that—double the student loan interest rate.

By the way, these are loans where people are taking out the money, and they are responsible and they are paying it back. But they are asking for help to make sure they can afford to be able to have those loans, so they can dream big dreams and go to college and be successful. I thought that is what our country was all about. When I was growing up in the little town of Clare—my dad was sick when I was in high school—if I hadn't had help with tuition and fees and scholarship and loans, I would not have been able to go to college. The great thing about our country is that a red-headed, freckled-face girl in Clare, who folks didn't know—folks somewhere decided that maybe I ought to have a chance to go to college. Because of that, I have had tremendous opportunities in my life. We have a lot of young men and women working hard every day who deserve the same opportunity. People who lost a job and are going back to get training deserve the same opportunity.

All four of these plans end Medicare as an insurance plan, increase by thousands of dollars costs to seniors, double student loan rates, and all of it is to make sure that we give more tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires. I know at least one or more of these plans adds $150,000, I believe, in average tax cuts. That is more than the average person in Michigan makes in a year—or the average person in America. We are saying to seniors, families, and students that we want you to pay more so we can give another tax cut to the folks who have already gotten the majority of the benefits in the last 10 years economically.

Let me stress one more time before ending, I think this goes to the values represented in these budgets. Do we want to say that retirees and older people in our country have the opportunity to live long lives? Social Security and Medicare are great American success stories. They literally brought a generation out of poverty to live in dignity, like my mom, who is almost 86, to a place where she is healthy and can play with her grandkids because she had the opportunity to be in a system called Medicare, and will be able to live longer. Those are good things, good values, not bad values.

All four of these budgets—the Paul budget would end Medicare in 2014; the Lee budget would end it in 2017; the Ryan budget in 2023; and the Toomey budget in 2023. I cannot imagine that Americans want to go back to that system where seniors cannot count on the ability to have their doctor and get their medicine and have the dignity of a long and healthy life.

Madam President, I urge our colleagues to vote no on every one of these resolutions which go backwards, and support our efforts to keep America going forward and focus on those things that will make our economic recovery even faster.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, we need to lay out a plan for the future of this country. That is what this is all about. My colleague just said vote no on all of them and keep going, don't go back. What I hear being said—and there is no ambiguity about it—is let's keep on the path we are on. This is good enough. Here is the letter: Let's be happy. We are in Washington, and we are having fun, I caught a fish and we had a party, send more money.

Isn't that what it is all about, isn't this what we are hearing from the other side? Send more money. We will take care of things for you. We don't have to cut anything. We are not on an unsustainable path. Actually, we cut spending over the next 10 years from $47 billion to $45 billion. Aren't we great. That is a huge increase over the current level of spending; it increases spending every year under the Budget Control Act—not nearly enough to change the debt course of the country. But that is OK.

By the way, do you know what President Obama's budget does? It wipes out the sequester. Before the ink is even dry on the Budget Control Act, the agreement at the eleventh hour to reduce spending over the next decade by $2 trillion, President Obama submits a budget in February proposing to wipe out the sequester—all $1.1 trillion of it. What kind of commitment do we have to control spending? Send more money; that is the solution. Tax, spend, tax, spend. I wish it weren't so. I wish I could say differently.

Well, let me ask this question: Do my colleagues not feel a responsibility to tell the American people what their financial plan for the future of America is? Do they have no responsibility? Do they feel no sense of obligation, no duty? All they want to do is attack anybody else's plan who is trying to save this Republic from financial disaster—attack them because they might want to reduce spending somewhere, and somebody might not like it because they didn't get quite as much from the government as they got before. Are there no programs that we are prepared to reduce or eliminate that are wasteful and not worthwhile? Is there nothing in this government? Maybe we stop GSA from having hot tubs in Las Vegas; maybe we ought to at least do that. How about the TSA, which has warehouses with millions of dollars of equipment in them that is not even being used? What about the $500 million Solyndra loan and other bogus loans to political cronies? And evidence is coming out that there is more of that. Can't we cut that? Or will they say that is anti-energy?

What they need to do is get off the backs of the energy producers and allow more energy to be produced. It doesn't take taxpayer money to produce more energy and have decent regulations. Do you know what they do? They send checks to Uncle Sam. They pay royalties on offshore and Federal lands. They pay taxes on the money they make. The people who work at the oil companies pay taxes.

That is the way you get money, not by just taxing somebody.

I think the American people fundamentally understand that a tax on the rich is a tax on the private sector, and when you overtax the private sector, you get less of it. It is the private sector that creates the wealth that pays the taxes that allows us to distribute money here and go back to our districts and act as though we are some hero for returning people their money that we took from them, and we want to be some specially credited person because we brought back some bacon to our district. The American people understand this. They are not happy about this.

The Budget Control Act is not close to what we need to do to put our country on a sound path. It is not close. I have to say that the President's budget undoes half of that. When I said the Budget Control Act took spending down from $47 trillion to $45 trillion, President Obama's budget that was submitted a few weeks ago would add $1.6 trillion back, so that would make it go from $45 trillion to $46 trillion in spending over 10 years.

This is the way they propose to operate this government. That is what their plan is. Why won't they lay it out? Because they know the American people will look at it and say: Good grief, that is not what we want for this country. You guys have to get your house in order. We expect you to cut some spending. We know there is waste, fraud, and abuse in the capital. You better get busy.

All we hear from my Democratic colleagues is: Send more money. What is particularly troubling is the suggestion that it is OK, we don't have to make any changes. But we do. We do have to make changes.

Let me show you this chart. The changes will be difficult, but not so bad as to have the country be damaged in any significant way. This is where our spending level is today, $3.6 trillion. This is the next decade under the Budget Control Act, where we cut spending. In that late-night confrontation before the government was to shut down because we reached the spending limit and could not borrow anymore money, an agreement was reached to take $2 trillion out of spending over 10 years. That is what this chart is—after that cut had been put in place. President Obama wants to wipe out half of it. So it would add $8 trillion in new spending. If you cut that to $6 trillion or $5 trillion, we would balance the budget. You would still show an increase; it would just maybe be a $4 trillion or a $5 trillion increase in spending instead of $8 trillion. We could make a big difference there.

The path we are on is unsustainable. The path we are on leaves us in the danger zone. The path we are on has led us to have more debt than Europe and more per capita than any country in Europe, and it is unsustainable. I am worried about this.

I am particularly worried that we don't have a sense in this body that we have to make changes. We are going to have to look at the entitlement programs. I have heard Senator CONRAD say this repeatedly. He served on the debt commission, and they said we have to do that.

Does the President propose any entitlement changes in his budget? No. Are the Democratic Members of the Senate proposing entitlement changes? No. Who is? Congressman RYAN has proposed entitlement changes. He is prepared to defend them as being the kind of changes that will preserve, protect, and sustain Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

We cannot allow entitlement spending to continue to increase at rates four and five times the inflation rate. That is an unsustainable spending course. When 60 percent of our budget is increasing at three or four times the inflation rate, we are in big trouble, and we can't tax our way out of that. That is just a fact. Upper income people are going to have to contribute more to Medicare. They just are. We don't have the money. We can't just make it up and act like that is not reality. It is reality.

So I think the budgets we will see from this side will be attacked viciously as wanting to kill these programs. They are not designed to kill these programs. They are designed to put us on a financial path where we can be healthy and prosperous and sustain the benefits we have promised. But a big chunk of Medicare is paid for out of the General Treasury of the United States, and people with big incomes ought to contribute to some of that, and they can do that. We can do that as a nation.

So, Madam President, I think it is rather odd that we have come to the floor and called up—without debate, without opportunity to amend—a series of budgets. Why? Because no budget has been produced in the Budget Committee, and under the rules of the Senate members can bring up a budget. We don't get to have amendments, but we can bring up one. Under the Budget Act, the Budget Committee should have hearings, have a markup, offer amendments, and bring the budget to the floor with a guaranteed 50 hours of debate, unlimited amendments, and then final passage within a certain time. That is the way it works. It guarantees priority to a budget because the people who wrote the Budget Act in 1974 knew how important a budget was. They gave it priority. It can't be filibustered. It can pass with 50 votes, with the Vice President—51 votes otherwise can pass the budget—because we need a budget, and we should be seeking to do that.

To me, it is pretty frustrating to see our current situation. So I guess I will conclude by asking: Does the majority party not feel an obligation to tell the American people where they would like to lead the country; and do they not, in a time of financial crisis, want to lay out a plan they can rally behind and ask the American people to rally behind to save our country?

It is an absolute fact this country has never, ever, ever, been in a financial condition as severe as this one. We have never, ever faced the long-term systemic debt threat we face today. We have never been on a path so unsustainable. Never. Nothing close to it. This is a threat to the future of America, and the party that aspires to lead the Senate should lay out its plan. The President should be engaged. He should be insisting we pass a budget that has some meaning and would change the debt course of the country. Yet what do we have? Nothing but attacks on Members of Congress who lay out plans that would actually do that.

They do not want to bring up a budget. Why? They say it is foolish. It would be foolish for us. Yes, it would be foolish to reveal ourselves. The American people might add up how many taxes we want to increase. They might add everything up and say: Your plan doesn't change the debt course. They may add things up and say: You spend too much. So we don't want to do that. That would be foolish.

I have never seen a situation where, in a time of crisis, this Nation has had a failure of leadership as great as we are seeing today. Now maybe I don't get this. Maybe something is wrong with me. But I think everyone who cares about the Republic should be prepared to stand and vote on proposals to put us on the right path.

We are not on the right path today. We have a threat out there that could put us in a financial crisis overnight. It could happen very quickly. When that occurs, it will be too late to fix it.

We saw the warnings that led to the 2007 financial crisis. That was a deeply damaging event—that crisis. We haven't gotten over it yet, and we could have another one. Wouldn't that be terrible? These numbers don't assume we have a recession. They have no real recession projected in the numbers we will see. We need to avoid a debt crisis, another financial crisis, as Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson, on the debt commission, told us to avoid. We need to do that, and we are going to have some leadership on both sides of the aisle, I believe.

So, Madam President, I will reserve the remainder of my time, and I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, Senator MENENDEZ is here to be recognized for 10 minutes, and we can do that at this point.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, last year the Budget Control Act became the law of the land, and it set discretionary spending limits for security and nonsecurity spending for not just 1 year but for 2 years. It puts us on a

path to reducing the deficit by more than $2 trillion over the next 10 years.

We now hear claims from our friends on the other side of the aisle that we don't have a budget. I guess if one says say it often enough people may believe it. But it seems our Republican colleagues have selective amnesia about the Budget Control Act.

We have a budget. It is called the Budget Control Act, and it has the force of law, which is more than we can say for any of the proposals before us today. So today's debate makes me wonder if we are on a dance floor instead of the Senate floor because we have already taken one step forward and now it is two steps back.

These Republican proposals call for extreme cuts on the backs of seniors, students, and the most vulnerable in our society without asking any contributions from millionaires and corporations. That is not fair, it is not balanced, and it doesn't reflect the priorities of New Jersey's middle-class families.

I strongly believe we must get our Nation's fiscal house in order, and I have always supported a fair and balanced approach to reducing our deficits. But I cannot, in good conscience, support proposals in which working families, seniors, and students must endure billions in cuts while oil companies—making $1 trillion in profits over the next decade—and billionaires are not asked to pay their fair share.

Supporters of the House Republican budget, introduced by Congressman RYAN, justify their radical changes to Medicare and other programs by saying: We simply can't afford it. But in the very same Republican budget in which we can't afford that, we see an average tax cut of over $¼ million to millionaires, and that is on top of the six-figure tax break they are already currently receiving from the Bush tax cuts. At the same time Republicans propose to add thousands of dollars of increased costs on the backs of middle-class seniors, they somehow find the money for another tax cut for millionaires that is worth more than four times the entire average household income of an American family.

People who have worked hard to build personal wealth should be applauded for their success. At the same time, many of them are willing to contribute to help the Nation in this tough economic time, if we ask. We know from experience that asking a fair share from the wealthiest and most successful, as we did during the Clinton era of prosperity, will not break our economy. It just comes down to a matter of fairness.

What we are seeing today is our friends on the other side of the aisle taking yet another run at shifting our Nation's financial burdens onto middle-class families, seniors and students, all while defending special breaks for their special interests. How is that fair? How is that balanced? It is not. And we can't let it stand.

Let's talk about the facts. Republicans are not only seeking to repeal the affordable care act, but they are also dismantling Medicare, Medicaid, and other vital programs. Under the Ryan budget, New Jersey's health care system would be devastated. The Republican plan would cut $39 billion in health benefits from New Jerseyans over the next decade, leaving families unable to find care and doctors unable to provide it. Their plan will throw upwards of 465,000 low-income families and seniors off Medicaid, kick more than 70,000 young adults off their parents' health insurance, and leave more than 3 million New Jerseyans—including 877,000 children—worrying about whether they will hit their lifetime benefit limit and lose coverage as a result.

For seniors, the Republican plan ends Medicare as we know it, leaving retirees to worry about whether the system they paid into their entire working lives will really be there for them when they need it. Their plan would force seniors out of the Medicare they know and instead provide an inadequate voucher they claim will cover the premiums for private insurance. That claim, however, is false, leaving seniors with an increase in out-of-pocket expenses of over $6,000 a year.

It also means immediately higher costs for the more than 126,000 seniors in New Jersey who have saved a combined $95 million on prescription drugs because every one of these Republican budgets will reopen the gap in prescription drug coverage we call the doughnut hole. The Republican budget also means 1 million seniors in New Jersey who have already accessed no-cost preventive health services, such as cancer screenings, would now be forced to pay for those screenings out of pocket. It also means 270,000 seniors and disabled individuals in my home State who rely on Medicaid for services such as long-term care will be kicked out of the system.

The most shocking about all of this is the radical Ryan budget seems to be the least extreme of the Republican budgets. For example, Senator PAUL's proposal calls for Medicare to end abruptly on January 1, 2014, while simultaneously decreasing Social Security benefits and raising the eligibility age to 70. Senator TOOMEY's plan would force seniors off Medicare and only provide a modest voucher to purchase private coverage. It would slash Medicaid by nearly $1 trillion—$180 billion more than even the Ryan budget calls for—and shift a massive and untenable burden on the States while leaving millions of families without coverage.

How is that fair and balanced? It is not, and we should reject these proposals.

Here is another fact about the Ryan House budget. Instead of making college more affordable, more accessible, and more achievable, the Ryan budget will do the exact opposite. It will create additional obstacles for students that could—according to a study by the Education Trust—ultimately take Pell grants away from 1 million students. For those who aren't kicked out of the system entirely, it will freeze the maximum Pell Grant award, despite tuition costs rising far above the rate of inflation. To add insult to injury, the Ryan budget would allow the interest rate on subsidized Stafford loans to double—a debate that is all too familiar to this body.

My Republican colleagues claim to support lower rates, but then they filibustered them, and now they are proposing a budget that would allow the interest rates to double. So for more than 60 percent of students who receive Pell grants while also taking out loans, the Ryan budget is a double whammy. Not only will they lose some or all of their Pell grants, they will be forced to pay double the interest on their loans, which will only increase with a reduction in Pell grants.

Today receiving some form of higher education is almost a prerequisite for a 21st-century career. In fact, young adults with only a high school diploma are almost three times as likely to be unemployed and earn just over half as much as those with a bachelor's degree.

But even as the demand for college graduates in the workforce increases, so have the costs of tuition, making higher education all the more critical, as well as for the Nation to be the global leader competitively. Yet it is more out of reach for millions of students if we follow these plans. How is that fair? How is that balanced? It is not, and it just shows the misguided priorities that are behind these proposals.

Middle-class families can't afford it. Seniors can't afford it. Students can't afford it. That is why we can't afford to let it happen.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, just to respond to my friend, the ranking member of the committee—and I have a lot of respect for the ranking member. The truth is on the larger issue we are not all that far apart. The larger issue is, as a nation, we are on an unsustainable course. This is as clear as it can be, and we have to deal with it. We have a difference with respect to what we have right now. I believe we do have a budget in place for this year and next year. The place where I would agree with the gentleman is we don't have the longer term plan.

The problem is, Are we really going to get all sides to get off their fixed positions right before a national election? That is a matter of judgment. I don't believe that it is going to happen.

I was part of the Simpson-Bowles Commission. In fact, Senator Gregg and I were the ones who got the Commission appointed, and he and I were 2 of the 11—five Democrats, five Republicans, one Independent—who voted in favor of the long-term plan that Bowles-Simpson put before the American people that would have reduced

the debt from what it would otherwise be by more than $4 trillion. Depending on what baseline you use, even more than that. That is the minimum we need to do.

I actually tried to convince the Commission to do $5.6 trillion. That was my proposal to the Commission, a $5.6 trillion package of deficit reduction and debt reduction. Why did I pick that? We could balance the budget in 10 years if we did.

But I do want to go back to this question about whether we have a budget right now, for this year. I say, with respect, I believe it is very clear we do. The Budget Control Act—not a budget resolution but a law—said very clearly the allocations, aggregates, and levels of spending shall apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2012. That identical language follows for 2013.

So pursuant to the Budget Control Act, in April I provided to the appropriators and the authorizers these budget allocations for appropriations: For security discretionary budget authority for 2013, $546 billion; for nonsecurity discretionary budget authority, $501 billion. That is a total, onbudget, of $1,040,000,000,954; mandatory spending, $815 billion, $671 billion, for a total of $1,862,671,000,000.

Then to the authorizing committees, I went through some of these numbers previously. The Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, $13,397 million; on entitlements for that same committee, $124,580 million; on Armed Services, $146,698 million; on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, $22,167 million.

Again, I could go through every committee, but there it is. The appropriations spending limits have been provided to the appropriators. The authorizing committees have been given their designations. So for this year and next, it is clear we have spending limits put in place. What we don't have is the longer term plan. That is where I would agree with the gentleman. The question is, Is there any prospect of the two sides coming together, getting off their fixed positions right now? I doubt that very much.

Madam President, Senator PAUL is here and he has this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, we are currently borrowing $50,000 a second. We borrow $4 billion a day, and we are borrowing over $1 trillion every year.

The situation has gotten out of control, and I think the situation of our deficit and our country threatens our country. In fact, I think it is the No. 1 threat to our national security, and our security as a nation is this overwhelming burden of debt.

Many economists have said this burden of debt is actually causing us to lose 1 million jobs a year. It crowds out private investment because we have to take care of financing this enormous debt.

Amidst all of this, we have rules in place. There is a Budget Act that we have had in place since the 1970s that requires that this body put forward a budget. The problem is we have no budget and have had no budget for 3 years.

Now, one would say: How can this be when we have a law that says the majority party has to have a budget, and yet we have no budget? They are in defiance of the law. Then if you were to come to us and say you want money spent on X item, we can't even do anything about it because there are no appropriations bills. If we don't have a budget, we don't have appropriations bills, and we can't alter up or down the appropriations bills because we don't have a budget to go by.

In fact, every bit of spending we do here is in defiance of our own rules because we are supposed to compare the spending bills to the budget, and we have no budget.

Many of us have been promoting something new—this would be a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution—because we don't seem to be doing a very good job balancing the budget. When you have less money coming in, you spend less money. Every American family has to do this. Why can't Washington simply spend what comes in? It shouldn't be that complicated. But they aren't obeying their own rules, so I think we need stronger rules. That would be an amendment to the Constitution that says we must balance the budget.

We had a vote on it. Forty-seven of us on our side of the aisle voted for it, and no one on the other side voted for it. Our balanced budget amendment to the Constitution would require that the budget balance within 5 years. In that vein, our office has put together a budget that does balance in 5 years, and it actually, over a 10-year period, would reduce the deficit by $2 trillion. Ours is the only budget that will balance in 5 years and begin paying down the debt over 10 years.

Right now, Congress has an approval rating of 11 percent. Maybe that has something to do with the fact that we aren't doing our job. We aren't passing a budget, much less a balanced budget amendment. If people vote for our budget, we would balance in 5 years and begin paying down the debt. I think the stock market would be ecstatic to hear this.

How do you do this? In order to balance the budget, we have to tackle entitlement reform. Currently, Social Security is $6.2 trillion short of money. The taxes people pay into Social Security are less than what we pay out. Social Security is essentially insolvent.

You ask: Well, how come my check keeps coming?

Your check will always keep coming. As the bankruptcy grows deeper and deeper, your checks will come—they won't buy anything. You are already seeing this at the pump. Gasoline prices have doubled. Is it because gas is more precious? No. It is because the value of the dollar is shrinking. The value of the dollar is shrinking because we print all this new money to pay for this massive debt. It is unsustainable, and one way or another it is going to come to a head.

Will it come to a head through the destruction of our currency paying for this debt? I don't know, but we certainly need a budget. Ours will be a budget that balances in 5 years. People say: Why don't you compromise with the other side?

We will, but they have to have a budget. If ours balances in 5 years and the other side will promote one that balances in 10, compromise would be 7½. But if the other side doesn't have a budget or if the other side has a budget—the President put forward a budget, and we will vote on that too. His never balances. So we have infinity for their side, and we have 5 years on our side. How do we get halfway from infinity to 5 years?

If we are going to compromise, they have to come to the table. We have to engage in a debate. Entitlements are 65 percent of the budget. They call it mandatory spending, and nobody wants to do anything about it. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid is 65 percent of the budget. If we don't tackle entitlement reform, we can't fix it. We have a proposal on the table.

Social Security reform, we fix Social Security. The way we fix it is we gradually let the age of eligibility rise to 70 over about 20 years, and we means-test the benefits—not on the current people but on the next wave. My generation will have to wait longer. Why? Is it because we want to change things? No. It is because we are living longer. We all have a longer life expectancy, and then we had smaller families. This isn't anybody's fault. It is not the Democrats' fault and it is not the Republicans' fault. We just had a bunch of large families born after World War II. They are all retiring, and each subsequent generation had less children. It is a demographic fact. Combine that with the fact that we are living longer, and we have to make changes.

But we have a proposal on the table. We will fix Social Security. How do we compromise if the other side will not come up with a proposal?

Social Security is $6 trillion in the hole. Medicare is $35 to $40 trillion in the hole. We have a solution. We will give every senior citizen in the country the same health care plan I have. The same health care plan that every Senator and Congressman has, we are willing to give it to them. Do you know whose idea this was? Senator JOHN KERRY from Massachusetts, a Democrat. We have taken his idea and put it forward, but we can't get anybody on that side to talk to us. They have given up. It is an election year. They are not going to do anything this year. They didn't do anything last year.

So we haven't done anything to fix entitlements. We have done nothing to

fix Social Security, nothing to fix Medicare. How do you compromise with a side that has no proposition, that won't put anything forward? But we have a 5-year plan that balances in 5 years, and we fix Social Security. We save Social Security in perpetuity—which, I laughingly say, is a long time.

We also fix Medicare. We save Medicare. Medicare is facing a $35 to $40 trillion deficit, and we are willing to save it. But the other side has to come to the table, and nobody is showing up to debate these issues. No one is proposing any budget on the other side. No one is proposing any entitlement reform.

In our budget we save Social Security, we save Medicare, and we go one step further. We have tax reform that would help the country and would make it fair.

Some on the other side say, well, let's get rid of all those loopholes for special interests. We do it. We do a flat tax: 17 percent for all businesses, 17 percent for all personal. You get to deduct your kids and your house, and that is it. No other deductions. No other special interest exemptions. No other special credits for any special business or special enterprise. A flat 17 percent for everybody. We would see a boom in this country like we have never seen if we would do it.

What would compromise be? Maybe the other side wants 25 percent, and I want 17 percent, and we go in the middle and we do 22 percent. That would be compromise. But how do we compromise with the other side when there is no budget? There is no entitlement reform proposed from the other side. There is no tax reform proposed from the other side. How do we compromise if there is no other side?

If the other side has decided not to show up this year—if this year is going to be a waste of time and everybody is going to just run for office, maybe we shouldn't be paid this year. Maybe you shouldn't pay your Congressman, maybe you shouldn't pay your Senator this year if we are not going to have proposals from both sides.

This means we should be talking about entitlement reform, talking about tax reform, talking about budgets, and there would be give-and-take.

The only way to get give-and-take in our country is people need to show up for the debate. We need to do our job. Why is there not a committee in Washington, not any committee—why is there not any committee meeting every day on how to fix Social Security? Nobody is talking about it. Why is there no committee discussing Medicare reform meeting every day, Republicans and Democrats, talking, figuring out a way out of this? There is no such committee.

Why is there not a committee on tax reform, discussing how we could make our Tax Code simpler and make it easier for people to figure out and make the rates lower so we could spur the economy? Every time we have lowered tax rates, unemployment is cut in half. When we had an upper rate of 90 percent and Kennedy lowered it to 70 percent, unemployment was cut in half. When Reagan lowered the top rate from 70 percent to 50 percent, unemployment was cut in half. When Reagan lowered it again from 50 to 28, unemployment was cut in half.

But we as a country have to decide that we do not want to punish rich people, that we do not want to go out and punish corporations. We work for these people. We want them to do better. The oil and gas industry employs 9.2 million people and pays $86 million a day in taxes. We want them to do better. Let's not punish them with more taxes and regulations. Let's make their taxes lower and their regulatory burden lower so they can drill for more oil in our country and employ more people in our country. These are the decisions we have to make as we go forward.

We have a budget that can balance in 5 years. It is what our country needs. I think people would react, and the marketplace in particular would react in a tremendous fashion if we would move forward and vote for a budget.

The Republicans will have four or five budgets presented. Some of them balance in 5, some of them balance in 8, some of them balance in 28. But we are at least trying. We are showing up and we are presenting budgets that would balance at some finite period of time. I tell people if it is never going to balance, it should not even be presented. If it is not going to balance in your lifetime—if you say it is going to balance in somebody else's lifetime when somebody else is going to be here in Congress—you have abdicated your responsibility. We can do better than this. The American people expect us to do better than this. The American people expect us to show up and do our job.

We will today vote on these budgets. What I ask of the American people is: Look and see how your Representatives vote. Look and see how your Senators vote. Look and see whether your Senators believe in balancing the budget or if they think it doesn't matter; we will just print up more money.

But realize if their answer is to print up more money, if their answer is deficits do not matter, if that is their answer, I want you to get mad and I want you to get angry and I want you to get even. Every time you go to the gas pump and pay $4 for gas I want you to know why gas prices are rising. Not because gas is more precious but because your dollar is less valuable, and that is because of the massive debt we run and the irresponsibility up here that nobody is willing to tackle it.

There are some on our side willing to make the tough decisions. Is it easy to stand here and say to the people in Kentucky and the people in America that the only way to save Social Security is letting the age of eligibility rise? Do you think that is popular? Do you think I am saying that to pander and try to get votes? I am saying that is because it is the only thing that is going to save Social Security, the only thing that will save our country, is we have to make difficult decisions. I think that is what needs to happen.

People need to say: Are you willing to make the tough decisions? Are you willing to stand up and say this is how we would fix Social Security; this is how we would save the system; this is how we would correct this deficit that is dragging us all down?

One side is willing to do that. I am willing to do that and I hope my fellow Senators will today consider voting to balance the budget.

I yield my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, we are waiting for a number of Senators who have sought time. They will be coming to the floor and we will hear from them momentarily.

Let me say Senator PAUL is sincere. One place I agree with him is that the country has to face up to our deficit and debt situation. As I indicated earlier, I was part of the Simpson-Bowles commission. We agreed to, and voted on, significant reforms, spending cuts, but we also used some additional revenue to have a balanced plan.

I believe that has to be the test for any of the proposals that are made here. As I see the proposals coming from our Republican colleague, they flunk that test because they are not balanced. There is nothing on the revenue side. In fact, in all of their plans, there are deep additional tax cuts aimed at the wealthiest among us. None of the Republican plans have less than a $150,000 tax cut, on average, for people with earnings of over $1 million a year.

Senator PAUL's plan is truly radical. He didn't mention a lot of the elements, but his plan includes massive tax cuts for the wealthiest among us. He scraps the entire tax system and goes to a 17-percent flat tax. That is a massive tax cut for those of us who have higher income—massive tax cut. I can tell you it would be a massive tax cut for my family.

He also cuts discretionary spending, education, and energy, by huge amounts. I will go into that in a bit. He cuts health care by almost $4 trillion.

He replaces the current progressive system with a 17-percent flat tax. He eliminates the estate tax—eliminates it. He eliminates taxes on capital gains and dividends—eliminates them. My goodness, think about what that would mean. People such as Warren Buffett would pay almost nothing in taxes. The richest people among us would pay almost nothing in taxes, because he eliminates taxes on capital gains and dividends.

But he is not so generous when it comes to lower income people. He raises taxes on lower income people by ending the earned-income tax credit and the child tax credit. He eliminates it.

Perhaps most stunning, his answer to saving Social Security is to cut the benefits 39 percent. The plan does not include a dime of revenue for Social Security. That is what Senator PAUL has before this body. Really? Is that what we should do? Massive tax cuts for the wealthiest among us and make up for it by cutting Social Security benefits 39 percent. That is the Paul plan. He increases the retirement age three times faster than the Fiscal Commission plan and he shifts to something he calls ''progressive indexing'' for those earning above $33,000, which cuts their benefits even deeper over time.

I respect his desire to do something about deficits and debt, but the answer is not massive tax cuts. Eliminate the estate tax? Eliminate capital gains taxation? No taxes—wow. Warren Buffett should send him a thank-you letter. And cut Social Security 39 percent?

I can go into the other details. He cuts energy dramatically. He cuts education. What is his education cut? I think we have it there. We will go into the specifics of the massive cuts so we can have more tax cuts for the wealthiest among us, trillions of dollars, and then cut Social Security 39 percent. That is breathtaking. We will see how many colleagues are going to stand up and support that in a vote later today.

Senator DURBIN is here. I thank him very much for his involvement. He has not only served on the Simpson-Bowles commission but also served on the group of six and has spent literally hundreds of hours trying to find a way on a bipartisan basis working together to come up with a plan that is balanced and fair, to get us back on the track and save trillions of dollars on the debt. I applaud him for it. He has shown enormous courage and also extraordinary energy trying to get our country back on track.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I thank Senator CONRAD. Let me say the retirement of Senator CONRAD from North Dakota is a great loss to the Senate and to the Nation. We have only six or seven months left to do something significant. It will be easier to do it when KENT CONRAD is working with us. I hope we can achieve it.

I also want to say for those who have come to the floor over and over to say it is time for a budget resolution, it bears repeating that we passed the Budget Control Act, which is a law. A resolution is just that, a resolution passed by the House and Senate, recommending our spending levels. A budget law passed by Congress, signed by the President, has the force of law and it in fact is going to determine our spending levels for the next year. The people who come to the floor and say isn't it about time we had a budget resolution so we knew what we were going to spend next year—we do. We passed it on a bipartisan basis. In fact, the Republican Senate leader voted for it, so it was not as though it wasn't a bipartisan effort, it was all the way, and the President signed it and it guides our spending.

Let me speak for a moment about those ''thrilling days of yesteryear,'' as they used to say on the old radio serial, going back to 2001, if you can stick with me for a minute. That was the last time the United States of America had a balanced budget. Who was President at the time? It was President Clinton, who left that budget for President Bush. That represented, I think, two or three successive years of balanced budgets.

I said to my staff: Take a look at the last time our budget was in balance, take a look at today, and compare spending and revenue between those two periods of time. I think the Senator from North Dakota told me once something like 19.6 percent of GDP in that year of balance was being spent, 19.6 percent was being raised in revenue, and there was the balance.

Now we have drifted to the point where I think spending is around 24 percent, is that close? And the actual revenue is down to 14 percent. The 10-percent delta equals the deficit.

But in specifics, what has happened in that period of time? Thanks to Senator INOUYE, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, here is a chart which tells the story. The blue line, of course, this bar, represents the spending and revenue in fiscal year 2001, the last time we had a balanced budget, and the red bar represents fiscal year 2012. I asked them to compare it and here is what we found. The security in there represents, of course, military spending, primarily military spending. In the period of time we were last in balance until today we have seen roughly a 60-percent increase in military spending—understandable, two wars, all the buildup that has been part of it—OK? A 60-percent increase.

Now let's take a look at nondefense spending. That would be everything from medical research, building highways or helping to build highways, education, basic health care. What has happened in real dollars since we were last in balance in that nonsecurity discretionary spending? Flat. Zero increase. But if you listen to the debate over the last 2 years here, you would think it was all the increase—all the increase we have seen in our deficit is attributable to these nonsecurity programs. Those are the ones we have been cutting away at. I think they represent 12 percent of the budget. We keep cutting away all these nondefense programs but they have not added to our deficit since we last were in balance.

Now look at mandatory programs. Mandatory programs, obviously Medicare and programs such as that, have seen an increase of about 30 percent because yesterday 10,000 Americans reached the age of 65, today 10,00 more, and tomorrow 10,000 more, and for the next 18 years 10,000 a day. Boomers have arrived. After paying into Social Security and Medicare for a lifetime they walk up to the window and say now it is my turn. It is understandable.

The demographics are growing for those who are covered by these mandatory programs, and the costs have been growing right along with them—a 30-percent increase.

Take a look at revenues, compared with when we were last in balance. Revenues have gone down 13 percent. Senator CONRAD and I were on the Bowles-Simpson commission and 18 of us sat there for a year-plus and listened to all this testimony about everything. Here is where we came down. He and I both voted for it. We believe the premise of the Simpson-Bowles commission is the right premise—everything must be on the table. Everything.

What do you mean by everything? Spending cuts must be on the table, both on the defense side and the nondefense side. In addition, we have to put the entitlement programs on the table. My friends, we cannot ignore this conversation. We are 11 or 12 years away from Medicare going bankrupt. We have to have a serious conversation about this, and we have to look seriously at the question of revenue.

We cannot ignore the fact that we have seen a decline in the revenue coming into the Federal Government since we last had a budget imbalance. We have to put all that on the table. I added another part that fits right into the revenue conversation, the Tax Code. This is not Holy Writ. The Tax Code is a compilation of laws passed over a long period of time that takes about $1.2 trillion out of the Treasury every year for deductions and credits and exclusions and special treatment.

They asked us at one of these meetings about the Tax Code: What do you think is the most expensive provision in the Tax Code that takes the most money out of the Treasury? I said, mortgage interest for sure. Wrong. The most expensive is the employers' exclusion of health insurance premiums. So imagine when we get into the debate about tax reform and the first item up is the biggest item up, employers' exclusion of health insurance premiums. Imagine that conversation. If we say your employer can no longer take the full deduction, what does it mean to you as an employee in terms of your out-of-pocket expense, in terms of your health insurance coverage? So I am not going to suggest tax reform is an easy exercise. It is hard, but it has to be part of the conversation.

Here is where we come down: We are having an exercise today, which is not worthless, it is important. It is an exercise in discussing the budget. What Senator CONRAD has spelled out are different visions of things. What we find coming from the other side of the aisle is primarily talk about more tax cuts—particularly for the higher income people—in the belief that that is how you

spark an economy and get it to go. I disagree with that premise. I think the way to move this forward is for working families and middle-income families to have more spending power. I don't believe we can give more money to the richest people in America and expect the economy to take off.

Also we find that many of the entitlement programs, which have now become critical safety net programs, are victims of the budget resolutions that come to the floor. I cannot imagine what life would be like for 40 million Americans on Social Security with a 39-percent cut—as Senator PAUL suggested—in Social Security benefits. Too many of these people are living on their Social Security checks and barely getting by. A 39-percent cut is cruel and unrealistic. I don't think it is going anywhere. And the notion from others that we can keep cutting taxes from the highest income categories, let me say, we will never balance the budget doing it. Never. If we don't balance the budget, we could jeopardize our economic recovery.

We have a cliff we are going to face on December 31. It is a big deal. I cannot remember a time when I have been in the House or Senate when so many things are going to happen in one day. But on December 31, all of the Bush tax cuts expire on the highest income levels as well as the lower and middle-income levels. For example, I think the 10-percent tax rate goes away, and the child tax credit is cut in half. All of these things mean more taxes for every American paying into income tax.

Secondly, we are going to see the end of the payroll tax cut—the 2-percent cut we have had for 2 years that the President put in place.

I could go through the litany. The bottom line is this: We need to start that honest conversation about the deficit now, and we need to put something on the table ready to be discussed. The group of eight—there are four Democrats and four Republicans—has been meeting for a long time. We are trying to put together a bill, something that could actually become law. I don't think it is the last word, but it may be the first word in the debate. If we cannot get anything done before the election, let's hope that the day after the election we can put this on the table and say: Here is our starting point. Let's solve the problem on a bipartisan basis, put everything on the table, and do it in a thoughtful, balanced way.

I think that is what the American people are looking for. They really are. They are beyond the charades of: Oh, this won't touch me, let's hit somebody else. I think everybody realizes we are in the soup together. If we come out of this together, think about where we will be as other Nations around the world are struggling to survive economically. I could go through the list in Europe, but we know it well. We don't want to put ourselves even close to that position.

The debt ceiling expires December 31, or soon thereafter. If we do not renew the debt ceiling, America will have defaulted on its debt for the first time in history. That is totally irresponsible. It is an invitation for the downgrading of our credit rating and the upgrading of the interest rates we pay and the upgrading of the deficit we owe. I hope the statements made by the House Speaker in the last couple of days don't reflect the position of his party when it comes to the debt ceiling. That would be a totally irresponsible act in terms of our economy.

I will join Senator CONRAD today in voting against the budget resolution that has come to the floor. But I will say this: I am glad we are having this conversation. We need to have more of them, and we need to have a bipartisan effort with both parties to make sure we deal with the current spending in a responsible way. And equally important, we need to find a way to get past the December 31 cliff in a way that will build the economy and not take away from it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator for his leadership and the extraordinary effort he has made to get us back on track. I thank him for supporting Simpson-Bowles and the group of six that is now the group of eight. Senator DURBIN has spent hundreds of hours in good-faith negotiations to bring both sides together so we actually get a result and not the political charade that so often goes on around here, but serious solutions to serious problems.

Senator WYDEN is a very valuable member of the Budget Committee and is here on the floor. No Senator has proposed more serious solutions to America's problems than Senator WYDEN, and he has done it without the benefit of having a committee staff that he controls. He does it based on his own hard work and the work of his office staff. He has proposed major tax reform, major health care reform, and he has done it in a bipartisan way. In many ways, I think he has set an example for everybody in this Chamber.

How much time does the Senator need?

Mr. WYDEN. Approximately 12 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, without turning this into a bouquet-tossing contest, I want Senator CONRAD to know how much I appreciate his leadership. I also want to make sure people understand the record. If the Congress had passed the bipartisan proposal the Senator put together on the budget with Senator Judd Gregg, the Conrad-Gregg proposal—a Democrat joined with a Republican—in 2010 we could have forced an actual effort to put together a comprehensive tax reform and spending agreement. As we know—and I don't need to go over the history—some of the sponsors of the proposal were not even willing to go along. But I think it is important that the country understand we have to do this in a bipartisan way. If Senator CONRAD and Senator Judd Gregg had prevailed in 2010, we could have forced actual spending reductions and tax reform in a bipartisan effort. I sure wish we had proceeded with it. And as one who supported it, I still think that would have been preferable.

For 7 years before being elected to the Congress, I had the honor of serving senior citizens. I ran the Senior Citizens Legal Aid Office, I served as the public advocate on our State's nursing home board, and I taught gerontology at several of our universities.

What I enjoyed most was the personal contact I had with senior citizens as a voluntary board member of our senior nutrition program. It is known as Loaves and Fishes, and through it I could bring meals to seniors at their homes on a number of occasions as part of the Meals on Wheels Program. Meals on Wheels is one part of government that truly understands the connection between the heart and the head. It touches the heart because I saw when we bring a nutritious meal to seniors, we can spend time visiting with them at home. Often they will tell us that we are the only visitor they will have during that day. It causes us to use our head and a sharp pencil. We can see without Meals on Wheels, as sure as the night follows the day, some of those seniors are not going to be able to stay in the community. They will end up needing institutional services, and those services are more costly. And, of course, seniors will often be less happy with those kinds of institutional programs.

I bring up Meals on Wheels today because several of the proposals that are offered by colleagues on the other side of the aisle are not going to be bipartisan because they substantially cut the part of the budget that funds Meals on Wheels. Through our research we specifically found that in several instances it will be between 17 and 59 percent in just the upcoming year.

Putting Meals on Wheels at risk like that defies common sense. I have already indicated from a compassion standpoint alone it warrants support. But even if Meals on Wheels doesn't grab your heart the way it does for me, it certainly ought to get the attention of your head because it is the kind of program that lets seniors have more of what they want, which is to be at home at less price to the taxpayers. It defies common sense to not be bipartisan in terms of approaching something like Meals on Wheels.

I think what is common sense is what Chairman CONRAD and other colleagues have touched on, and that is tackling the big issues in a bipartisan way. Certainly when it comes to Medicare, that is what is needed. I would only say, having worked in this area, we ought to start with the fact that we are looking at—I am not the first to describe this—a demographic tsunami. For the next 20 years we are going to

have 10,000 seniors turning 65 every single day—10,000 seniors turning 65 every single day.

Fortunately, we have made a commitment in this country to those senior citizens, and it is called the Medicare guarantee. That is the commitment we have made to older people. It is a commitment to good quality, affordable health care. And if absolutely nothing is done, it is a commitment at risk. If nothing is done, the Medicare guarantee is in peril. My own sense is that if nothing is done, Medicare—as Senator CONRAD pointed out, it is already facing cuts with sequestration—will face a steady diet of benefit cuts and cost shifting until we do not recognize the Medicare guarantee as it stands today. That is unacceptable to me. It ought to be unacceptable to every Member of the Senate.

As Chairman CONRAD has noted, Medicare reform is going to have to be bipartisan. The reason I believe that is that if it is not, much like we saw with health care reform, if it is done on a partisan vote, as soon as the ink is dry on the signature of the passed bill, the other side will move to undo it or repeal it or radically alter it. I say the Medicare guarantee is too important for that, and that is why I, with other colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the help of the chairman, have been working to get bipartisan Medicare reform ready and teed up for enactment at the first possible opportunity. It is outlined on my Web site, Bipartisan Options for Reform. I am interested in working with every colleague here in the Senate to pursue it.

Here is what it is going to take: First and foremost, it will protect the most vulnerable seniors, what are called the dual eligibles, which are seniors who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. The protections for those dual eligibles must be ironclad.

Unfortunately, a number of the offerings we are going to see from colleagues on the other side do not ensure ironclad protections for these vulnerable seniors—the dual eligibles—and by block-granting Medicaid, they put at risk the most vulnerable seniors, the seniors who need nursing home care that is paid for by Medicaid, and since Medicaid is a Federal-State program, by block-granting it, we put at risk the most vulnerable seniors. That is certainly not in line with what people will see on my Web site that outlines bipartisan approaches on which Democrats and Republicans can come together for Medicare reform.

The second part of Medicare reform is to ensure that we protect traditional Medicare. Traditional Medicare mandates that the government pay doctors and other providers for services, as well as providing private sector choices that have to offer coverage that is at least as good as traditional Medicare. By doing that, we force traditional Medicare and the private choices to hold each other accountable. It is going to be pretty hard to protect traditional Medicare and its purchasing power with some of what we are going to see later this afternoon that actually proposes to end traditional Medicare within the space of 2 years.

Third, Medicare reform—and we went into this in a very good hearing that was held in Chairman CONRAD's Budget Committee—is going to require comprehensive consumer protection. I have been involved in this since the days when I would go visit senior citizens and they would bring out a shoe box full of health insurance policies that weren't worth the paper on which they were written. It was a Medigap scandal that we finally fixed in 1990. I have seen how these rip-off artists try to exploit our seniors. So at Chairman CONRAD's hearing we talked about comprehensive consumer protections and specifically ensuring that any Medicare reform would have to have a strong risk-adjustment program so that if, for example, any network of health care providers or an insurer took mostly healthy people, their contribution from the government would be far less than the contribution that would be afforded for a program that took a greater number of older people with health challenges.

So I bring this up only by way of saying I am committed to bipartisan Medicare reform. I think Medicare is really sacred ground. It can only be preserved and protected by ensuring that we take the steps I have just outlined—three or four of them this afternoon—which ensure that we put seniors and their well-being before ideology and politics. This afternoon we are going to hear several alternatives offered by colleagues from the other side of the aisle that, in my view, don't do that, don't meet that test. In effect, we are going to be dealing with ideology rather than the kinds of principles I have outlined here today that I think can win support from colleagues on both sides of the aisle and that people can see on my own Web site have attracted the support of influential Republican voices.

So we have a test to meet. It is a test that builds on a bipartisan approach to a program that is sacred—I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

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

Mr. WYDEN. —and that is built around a Medicare guarantee that must be protected and preserved. A number of the proposals we will get from the other side this afternoon don't meet that test.

I want colleagues to know that I am committed to working with them to produce what America wants in this Congress; that is, bipartisan Medicare reform that ensures that this very special program prospers in the days ahead. We are up to it. We are up to it if we build on the bipartisan example Senator CONRAD started years ago with Senator Gregg.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator. I thank him for the extraordinary work he has done on the Budget Committee. I thank him for the extraordinary work he has done as an individual Senator to propose bipartisan tax reform, bipartisan Medicare reform, and the kinds of thoughtful solutions we so desperately need.

I see Senator LAUTENBERG is here. We are glad to have the Senator. How much time would the Senator like?

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask for recognition from the Presiding Officer to move ahead with my statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I wish to inform the Senator from New Jersey that Senator ALEXANDER is scheduled to be here at 12:30 or thereabouts, so if the Senator could consume about that amount of time, we can make this all work.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. We will give the Senator a good greeting.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, one thing we know is that a budget isn't just a collection of numbers, it is an expression of principles and priorities and direction.

While I have the floor, I will take a moment to say to our friend and colleague from North Dakota that he has been one of the strongest chiefs of the Budget Committee. I sat on the Budget Committee for a long time. I think it is fair to say, Republican or Democrat, the Senator from North Dakota deserves the thanks and respect from everybody here for the detail and for the arduous task he took on to make sure our budgets were clear. No matter how often the challenges came, Senator CONRAD would stand and give the background and give the details that got him to a point of view, and we are grateful, and we will certainly miss his presence here.

The budgets the Republicans have put forward today confirm their true priorities.

I had a good business career before coming to the Senate, and I remember that during the Second World War we raised taxes on high incomes and on excess profits because the country needed the revenues. We needed to make investments.

Again, the budgets the Republicans have put forward today confirm their true priorities. What are they? They really are pushing, working hard to make sure people who make millions can get tax breaks. It is a little hard to understand, with the shortages we have and needing to invest in more programs, that they are worried about those who make more than $1 million a year. I have had a good business career, and I want to make sure our country is strong, and I want to make sure my contribution is included among those who should be paying.

What Republicans do not seem to care about in their budgeting is seniors, children, and middle-class Americans. At a time when our economy is

fighting against strong headwinds and too many Americans are out of work, the Republicans are offering the same old prescriptions: tax cuts for the rich and austerity for everyone else.

Now, I have seen this country of ours through adversity many times, and I have seen it come out stronger on the other side. But our recoveries have never been spurred by starving the middle class while giving tax breaks to the wealthy. Prosperity has never trickled down from the wealthy few. Prosperity has always grown up from a broad middle class. We can't build a building starting with a chimney, and we can't build a society's strength by starting from the top. It has to have a foundation at the bottom that is strong and has the ability to support the needs of our total society.

But a strong middle class depends on a first-rate educational system—and forgive the personal annotation here for a moment more. When I got out of the Army—I was a high school graduate. I enlisted when I was 18, and I was lucky. I was able to get an education paid for by the government. I was one of 8 million soldiers—service people—who got our education paid for virtually because of the fact that we had served in the military. As a result, half of those who were in uniform—8 million out of 16 million—got a college education.

I can tell my colleagues that it enabled me, working with two colleagues, to start a company that the three of us founded, a company that took years and years to build. Slowly and energetically it began to develop. Today that company produces the labor statistics every month for the worldwide knowledge of what is happening with working people, what their wages are, what employment is like. The name of the company is ADP. We have 50,000 employees now. We were three poor boys with nothing going for us except the willingness to work hard, and that is the value. What did we get? It was determined that was the greatest generation. Why? Because an education was given to so many who could learn but didn't have the ability to get to college.

What we need is a society with affordable and accessible health care and a tax system where everyone pays their fair share.

The Republican budgets include vicious cuts to the middle class. Just look at what they do to education. They slash funding for education by $19 billion. They want to do that now when we desperately need the skills and the knowledge that education brings and the opportunity for invention and creation. They want to take away $19 billion. That is not going to help us get out of the hole we are in.

The Ryan budget coming from the House of Representatives would cut education, as I pointed out, by $19 billion. They don't want us to see the specific programs they cut, but let's look at the devastating consequences if their cuts were distributed evenly.

I don't know whether Head Start is a familiar operation in our country, but it is one of the most valuable. I believe there are about a million children who participate in the program. Look at the face of this child, looking through a narrow prism. There are 200,000 of these children who will be told: Stay home. There is no room for you. We can't afford to pay for you.

I recently went to a Head Start school in New Jersey and I met the children. I am such a professional grandfather that all little kids look beautiful to me. I met the children. What they were learning was that learning is fun. Words mean something. Pictures mean something. They were prepared, when they got to kindergarten or first grade, to say that learning is good.

I met a child there. The children lined up to greet me. This is a school that is bilingual.

I said: What is your name?

The little boy standing in front of me said: My name is Julio.

So I put my hand out to shake his hand, and he pushed it aside and instead he wrapped his arms around my legs and gave me a hug. All the little kids who followed thought he was the leader, so they all gave me hugs. It was one of the best days I have had, to see what happens when we treat these little kids to an opportunity to learn. Imagine slashing funding for a program that will help children learn how to learn.

These cuts are shortsighted. They are cruel. Ten million college students could see their Pell grants cut by more than $1,000 in 2014—very painful.

With less support and rising costs for higher education, young people would be forced to take on more debt in order to attend college because we see college tuition is going up rapidly across the country.

The Republican budgets address student debt too. They would let the interest rate on the new student loans double, increase by twice. It is an outrage. Why are Republicans putting obstacles in front of young people seeking an education? I never would have been able to attend, as I said, Columbia University without that government help for me and the services that ADP provides. It enabled me to cofound one of America's most successful companies. The investment this country made when we came home from World War II helped to create the momentum and direction of this country with decades of prosperity.

But instead of offering a helping hand to this generation of students, the Republican proposals close the door in their faces. Government investments in science, technology, and medical research are cut by more than $100 billion over the next 10 years. Medical research funding alone could take a hit of nearly $6 billion by 2014.

What does that do? It delays research on new treatments for diseases such as cancer, childhood asthma, and juvenile diabetes. Imagine telling a parent of a sick child that we could not help find the money to help him get back with his friends out in the play yard or the schoolroom or going to school on a regular basis. Is that where America wants to be? Right now we are finding across the country that there is a greater likelihood that autism will enter into a family's difficulties with a child being born with autism. How can we say no when we see, in my State alone, that 1 in 29 male babies has autism? That is a plague. That is a terrible statistic.

Then we want to talk about cutting back on health research? In their budgets, instead of helping seniors retire with dignity, Republicans have proposed to end Medicare as we know it, giving seniors a voucher instead of guaranteed care. If that voucher cannot cover the cost of needed medical services, Republicans say: Hey, too bad; you are on your own. We have heard comments from them saying: Well, so what if you are poor. It does not matter.

I look at this chart that says: ''Ends Medicare As We Know It To Provide Tax Cuts For The Wealthy.'' They want to say that to people who need the care, who are fortunate enough now under present conditions to be able to have long-term care with a disease that is terminal.

The Republican plan would also cut Medicaid. Medicaid is a program for those less able to provide for themselves because of low income or no income. The Republican plans also want to cut that by more than $800 billion over 10 years. Medicaid provides vital resources such as pregnancy services for expectant mothers and nursing home care for seniors.

We created Medicare and Medicaid because it was decided in this country as a society that we have to be there for seniors and the poor when they get sick. But now the Republicans are proposing to break that promise. They seem to do it without shame.

Republicans are not even exempting the hungry from their cuts. They would eliminate food stamps for up to 10 million Americans over the next decade.

In their obsession with austerity, they cut through far more than the fat in the budget. They cut into the bone.

Many on the other side—and I do not say all; a lot of people on the other side are good people concerned about their constituents, concerned about what happens—but many on that side say balancing the budget is the mission, the only mission. And in order to do it, they want to make sure that includes a high priority for tax breaks for the millionaires.

We could reduce our deficit if we required the wealthiest among us to pay at least the same tax rate as middle-class Americans on all of their income. But, instead, a Republican budget would give millionaires an average tax cut of almost $400,000 a year. Their

plan shreds the safety net for seniors and the poor while padding the mattress for the rich.

I ask my colleagues, please get your priorities straight. America needs your help across the board. Your families, your neighbors, your State, all need your help. Millionaires do not need more tax cuts, and they certainly should not get them at the expense of seniors, children, and the middle class.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator.

Senator ALEXANDER is next. I wonder if we could enter into a quick time agreement to get the next Senators slotted. That might help us manage the floor, I would say to my colleague, Senator SESSIONS.

Mr. SESSIONS. Right. I believe Senator TOOMEY is here and would be prepared to go next after Senator ALEXANDER.

Mr. CONRAD. We have Senator REED slotted in between.

I wonder if we could propose—I say to Senator ALEXANDER, how much time would you like?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Well, Mr. President, what I wish to request is—Senator COONS and I were hoping to introduce a piece of legislation on another matter and talk about it. I think, given the focus on the budget here, I am going to suggest to Senator COONS, who will be coming here at 12:45, that we just mention our bill. If he could have time to do that, and then we would stay focused on the budget, and we will talk about the other matter tomorrow.

So what I wish to do, if I may suggest, is ask that I have 5 minutes to speak on the budget and maybe 5 minutes to speak on the other matter, for Senator COONS to be recognized for 5 minutes, and that would take all of the time I would ask for.

Mr. CONRAD. The problem is, we are oversubscribed by that. It is difficult to—we have not been yielding for things that are not budget related, I would say to the Senator. So I wonder if it would be agreeable if the Senator would take 5 minutes on the budget, we come back to Senator REED, if he could take 5 minutes on the budget, and then we go to Senator TOOMEY for 15 minutes on the budget because he has a substantive budget alternative that deserves additional time.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I think that is a reasonable request. I wonder if I might ask on behalf of Senator COONS that if he should come to the floor during that period, he be recognized for 1 minute to simply stand up and say he was planning to do this, but we will defer the introduction of our bill until tomorrow out of respect for the budget discussion.

Mr. CONRAD. I appreciate that very much.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator ALEXANDER be recognized for 5 minutes on the budget, Senator REED of Rhode Island for 5 minutes on the budget, then Senator TOOMEY for 15 minutes on the budget, and if Senator COONS comes after that point he be recognized for a minute on a separate matter, and then we come back to Senator WHITEHOUSE for 8 minutes. If we could lock those in I think that would help all Members.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, am I now recognized for 5 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. President. Please let me know when 30 seconds is remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will do so.

FOREIGN STUDENT LEGISLATION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, Senator COONS will come to the floor in a few minutes. He and I have been working together on legislation that many Senators on both sides of the aisle support.

Very simply, it pins a green card on the lapel of any foreign student who is involved in science, engineering, technology graduate programs who gets a degree and who wants to stay in the United States and work. What we would like for them to do, instead of going home to create the next Google in India or China or some other country, is to stay here and create it here.

The legislation has broad support. It is a recommendation of the American Competes Act which I worked on and many others did in 2005 and 2007. We will come to the floor and talk about that tomorrow. But I wanted to salute Senator COONS for his leadership on this issue and recognize it.

Now I will turn to the budget with my remaining time.

Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan recently said the worst mistake President Obama made was not embracing his own fiscal commission's recommendations to reduce our debt by $4 trillion over the next 10 years.

Today, our national debt is more than $15.6 trillion, which is nearly $1.9 trillion higher than it was when the fiscal commission released its recommendations and $6.4 trillion higher than when President Obama was sworn in. In January 2013, the first thing the next President will have to do is to ask the Congress to increase the debt ceiling. The fundamental problem is that Washington does not know how to balance its checkbook.

The President has proposed a budget that raises taxes by $1.9 trillion over the next 10 years and still spends more than it takes in every year, instead of endorsing the fiscal commission's recommendations—or any other plan to address our Nation's fiscal crisis. According to the Congressional Budget Office, under the President's budget, interest on our debt will triple over the next 10 years, and by 2022 we will be spending more in interest than we spend on national defense.

This is an irresponsible proposal, and instead of playing politics we should be working together on a plan to address the debt, which is the most urgent problem facing our country and, according to former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, the biggest threat to our national security.

The Simpson-Bowles fiscal commission plan, the Domenici-Rivlin plan, and the Gang of Six proposal all offer bipartisan blueprints for how to address it. Each of these proposals would reform the Tax Code and restructure entitlement spending—the main source of our dangerous Federal debt—so that seniors can count on Medicare and Social Security and taxpayers can afford them.

Mandatory entitlement spending, which is 58 percent of the Federal budget, is growing at nearly 3 times inflation and bankrupting our country. Discretionary spending, which funds our national defense, our highways, our national parks, and National Laboratories, is only 36 percent of the Federal budget and is growing at the rate of inflation. Focusing our budget cutting on discretionary spending is just a way for Congress—to use the President's words—to kick the can down the road. The real work is reducing the growth of mandatory spending.

Although the Senate is not debating its own budget resolution, going 1,113 days without passing a budget, we are debating several proposals. I do not agree with every one of these, but I do support the House-passed budget because it is a serious proposal to cut out-of-control spending and help solve our fiscal crisis.

I will also support the proposal offered by Senator TOOMEY. Even though it cuts nondefense discretionary spending to 2006 levels, which I believe is too low, it reforms mandatory entitlement spending, it closes tax loopholes, it lowers tax rates, and it would save Medicare for future generations.

Senator TOOMEY and I have also discussed the possibility of allowing States to have the option of choosing per capita caps on their average Medicaid expenditures per beneficiary as an alternative to traditional block grants, and I am encouraged by these discussions.

Last August, I supported the Budget Control Act because it was an opportunity to take an important step in the right direction.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. President.

The House-passed budget and the budget proposed by Senator TOOMEY are opportunities to take the next step after the Budget Control Act. I look forward to working with them to adopt a responsible budget that grows the economy and reduces our debt.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

STUDENT LOAN INTEREST

Mr. REED. In 46 days, the interest rate on subsidized student loans will be doubled. Zeroing in on these budgets that are before us, all of them seem to support the essence of the Ryan budget, which is to allow this to happen. In fact, the Ryan budget in the House not only allowed a doubling of student interest rates, it also recommended eliminating the in-school interest subsidies for student loans, putting middle-class families at a particularly severe disadvantage.

We have 46 days to stop this increase on the interest charges to middle-income students. We have to act. We have seen denial, delay, and disruption. We have not seen the cooperation we need to help students and families throughout this country.

The budget before us not only allows this interest rate to double, but it will also, through its tax policies, favor the wealthiest and not those who are struggling in the middle simply to get ahead or simply to stay where they are. One of the other interesting aspects of the proposal is that as we look at this student rate interest doubling, my colleagues on the other side have said: We will fix it. We are for fixing it. But, again, ask yourself: If they are for it, why are they voting for several budgets today that would, in fact, support the doubling? It seems to be an incongruity I cannot understand.

In addition to that, they said: Well, if we are going to go ahead and stop this doubling of the rate, let's do it by paying for it with the prevention fund, which is a program in health care that I think, over time, is not only going to help families all across this country, but it is going to begin to do what we have all said we have to do, bend that cost curve for health care.

Instead of a debate about how to pay for this in a responsible way—and we are certainly open to proposals if they have them, other than this prevention fund, which I think is a nonstarter—they have suggested that our proposal, which is to close an egregious loophole in the Tax Code, is somehow a tax increase or somehow does not do the job. But Politifact, which is an objective body that looks at these various charges, has evaluated one claim that, in fact, our offset is a tax increase. Here is what they say:

> Actually, the bill changed tax rules only for S-corporations, and only on professionals like lawyers and accountants who could be taking advantage of the tax code to avoid paying payroll taxes. The Democrats took the additional step of saying the rule change would only apply to individuals who reported more than $200,000 in income.
>
> The bill's intent was to close a loophole on people who are avoiding payroll taxes, taxes that they are supposed to pay anyway.

The Republican criticism ''gives the impression that all kinds of mom-and-pop operations might be subject to new, additional taxes, when actually the bill is aimed squarely at high-income professionals who are taking advantage of a loophole.

The claim was rated by this organization as false. We are closing a loophole that benefits the wealthy and some of the most powerful interests in this country in order to allow middle-income families to send their children to school. I cannot think of anything more sensible or anything more fair.

I will just return to the final point about these budgets. As I read them, they, by and large, echo the Ryan budget, which allows for a doubling of the interest rate on students and does other things that will harm middle-income and middle-class people all to benefit the wealthiest through additional tax cuts. That is not good fiscal policy, not good educational policy. It is not good policy for the growth of this country, to invest in education, and it is not fair. I would hope that we would reject them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleague, Senator ALEXANDER, in briefly making reference to a bill which we introduced today and which we will speak about in more detail on the Senate floor tomorrow.

At the moment, the Senate is engaged in an important and purposeful debate on the budget. I support Chairman CONRAD and his leadership of our Budget Committee. We will cast a series of other important and difficult votes on budget matters later today. But I take 1 minute to say that at a time when there is not enough bipartisanship, I am grateful to Senator ALEXANDER for his leadership and for working with me on an issue that will, I hope, move forward—the debate on how we make the promise and the opportunity of America open to more real job creators.

The record shows that a significant number of the most innovative and fastest growing companies in America were founded by immigrants. Immigrants have long contributed significantly to our culture, to our strength, and to our competitiveness. I think this particular bill, which opens a new class of visa for students from outside the United States who would pursue master's or doctoral programs in STEM, is an important step forward.

There are many other issues in immigration we need to resolve. There are many other elements we need to reform. But I am grateful for the chance to work with Senator ALEXANDER on this bill and will address it further tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the budget resolution I have introduced and on which we will have a vote later today, at least on a motion to proceed. I want to start with underscoring the magnitude of the challenge we face. We have a full-blown crisis that awaits. It could arrive at any moment virtually if we do not change the course we are on.

The deficit we have in 2012, $1.3 trillion, is the fourth consecutive year with a deficit of over $1 trillion. We are now routinely running deficits that are 7, 8, 9 percent of GDP. Of course, every year we run a deficit, the excessive spending over the tax revenue has to be funded by more borrowing. So we have the mounting debt that is now at stunning levels. For much of the post-war era, after the big repayment of debt after World War II, the national debt fluctuated somewhere around 40 percent of our total economic output.

Today our actual debt held by the public is 73 percent of our total economic output, and that is just the publicly held debt. That does not include the liabilities within the government, which, if you add that, is up to 100 percent of our total economic output. This has never ended well for a country that last chose to run up massive deficits and massive debt. I would argue that we are seeing exactly how this typically plays out. We are seeing it across the Atlantic in Europe where countries are a little further down this road than we are today, having run big structural deficits for longer than we have, and having accumulated more debt as a percentage of GDP than we have thus far.

We see what has happened, especially in countries such as Greece where it is particularly acute, and other countries, especially on the periphery of Europe, that arguably are not terribly far behind. This is completely unsustainable, and I think what we are witnessing today on the Senate floor is that there is one party in this Chamber that is addressing the problem. There is one party that is proposing very specific solutions.

It is perfectly reasonable to have objections and disagreements with any number of elements in my budget resolution or Senator PAUL's or Senator LEE's or the Ryan budget. But what I do not understand is how the majority party, the party that is actually in control of this Chamber, can think that it is OK not to have an alternative, not to offer a vision, not to offer a solution to the biggest problem we face as a nation and one that is imminent; one that if left unaddressed certainly will result in a crisis. It is just a question of when.

So I think this is an unacceptable abdication of responsibility. But that is where we are. I would argue that what got us into this problem is too much spending. Look at the numbers. They speak volumes. Since 2000, Federal spending has more than doubled. We took spending, which was as recently as 2007 only a little over 19 percent of our total economic output, and grew that to 24 percent of our economic output. That is a tremendous surge, not just in the absolute dollars in spending but in the relative size of spending relative to our economy.

President Obama's budget is not a serious attempt to deal with this. It was

put on the floor of the House of Representatives and got precisely zero votes. It failed 414 to 0, meaning not a single Democrat wanted to vote for the President's proposal. I can understand why. The President's proposal is to increase spending, increase taxes, and increase debt.

The President's proposal claims to level off debt as a percentage of GDP for a brief time but then starts to grow again. The reason the President absolutely refuses to offer a budget resolution that solves this problem is because he refuses to deal with the real underlying driver of this, which we all know are the big entitlement programs.

The current structure of these programs is unsustainable. If anyone doubts it, look at what CBO has shown us and has told us. By 2021, 9 years from now, if we take three categories of Federal spending: the Social Security Program, interest on our debt, and health care entitlements, those three things combined will consume almost 90 percent of all of the revenue we can realistically hope to collect, if the last several decades are any indication of what we are going to collect.

How could it possibly be that we would continue down this path where those three categories are going to consume virtually the entire budget? I would also observe it is a simple matter of arithmetic that no significant Federal Government program can grow faster than the economy for very long because everything has to be paid for by the economy. In fact, it has to be paid for by some fraction of the economy. If we have a big program that is consistently growing much faster than the economy, well, it will consume everything. Then these programs will collapse, and then what are we going to do?

Rather than waiting for that day to come, some of us are proposing specific solutions for this problem. Medicare is growing much faster than the economy. Medicaid is growing, arguably, at least two times as fast as the economy. Other mandatory health care programs, if President Obama gets his way, will grow even faster.

This is all completely unsustainable, and we are going to fix this problem. The question is whether we fix it while we have this window of time, when we are still able to borrow the massive sums that we are borrowing, or will we wait until we have a full blown crisis, the bond market shuts us down, and then we have sudden Draconian and very disruptive and painful decisions to make.

I would rather do this while we have this moment, change the course we are on, and establish a sustainable fiscal path. So I have submitted a budget for the second consecutive year that puts us on a path to balance. My budget balances within the 10-year historical window of the budget resolutions. It actually balances in the eighth year and runs a very modest budget surplus in the ninth year.

I do that in part by reducing the total level of spending relative to GDP as compared to the alternative budgets, specifically the President's alternative or CBO's. I cannot compare it to the Senate's Democratic alternative budget because that does not exist. We have no idea what the Senate Democratic proposal is, but I have one.

So I will elaborate on that a little bit. My proposal is that we get spending down to about 18.3 percent of GDP. That is about the same level revenue has been historically, which thereby brings our budget into balance. Some of my colleagues have suggested there are Draconian spending cuts that will get us there. Well, let me be very specific about what spending cuts are necessary to achieve this.

In 2013, spending in my budget is 2.9 percent below what it is in 2012, which means the Federal Government will spend—under my budget, it would spend 97.1 percent of everything it spent the previous year. People can decide whether that constitutes Draconian cuts.

Now, here is the amazing thing. After that, on average, over the 10-year window, my budget calls for Federal spending to increase—in fact, to increase at about a rate of 3 percent per year nominally. See, this is my point. This is a solvable problem. All we need to do is cut out some of the excess, restructure certain programs, and allow the government spending to grow. It just cannot grow quite as rapidly as it is currently projected to do.

If we get that under control, we can put ourselves on a sustainable path.

Another part of this is to have policies that maximize economic growth. I mean that is an important goal in and of itself, but it is also a path to restoring balance because stronger growth generates more revenue for the Treasury.

Well, my budget would do that without raising taxes. What I would do is have progrowth tax reform. That is comparable in spirit and in the right direction. It goes to all of the bipartisan commissions that have looked at this, whether it is Simpson-Bowles or Rivlin-Domenici or any of the others. I know there is broad bipartisan consensus on the principle that we would have stronger economic growth if we simplified the code, broaden the base on which we apply taxes, and then apply those taxes but at lower marginal rates. That is what my budget calls for. It should not be all that controversial to move in this direction of tax simplification, lowering marginal rates, and offsetting the lost revenue by reducing the value of deductions and loopholes and writeoffs. That is what my budget asks for.

There are a couple of areas that I think are important where there is bipartisan support for elements within my budget. One is, the President of the United States suggested in his budget that very wealthy senior citizens contribute a little bit more for the Medicare benefits that they obtain. Some means testing already occurs within Medicare. But I happen to agree with the President that it is reasonable, especially under these circumstances, to ask the wealthiest members of our society to pay a little more for the benefits they are getting from the government.

So my budget adopts the President's proposal of expanding means testing, expanding the contribution we would ask from the wealthiest Americans for their Medicare benefits.

I also include in my budget long-term reform for Medicare that makes it more viable. This has been much maligned despite the fact that one of our Democratic colleagues, Senator WYDEN, supports this approach as well.

I wish to emphasize that this is a different plan than what it was last year. Last year there was a criticism that any premium support model that establishes the amount of money given to seniors to purchase health care at a fixed dollar amount was a flawed approach because what if health care costs rose more rapidly than that amount could afford to pay for? That is a valid concern.

There is a different dynamic, a different mechanism in the House-passed budget, and in my budget, and I think it is part of the reason a Democratic Senator has embraced this, and Alice Rivlin, a former senior member of the Clinton administration, supports this. You set the premium based on the second lowest bid for the health care services we want to provide, thereby ensuring that a senior citizen would have enough money to purchase that plan. Not only that but we go further and include the traditional fee-for-service Medicare system to which seniors are currently accustomed—we include that as one of the plans that could bid. So it is absolutely the case that any senior citizen who wanted to stay with the traditional fee-for-service Medicare Program could do so under the reform plan.

I happen to believe that in an innovative marketplace, there will be more attractive options. I happen to know that under this system, a lot of seniors—my parents included—have to wait forever to see a doctor, and part of the problem is the dysfunctional system we have now. It is already costing us access and quality in health care.

I think this reform will make Medicare a better program for the people who need it. Yes, we will ask the wealthy to pay a little more for it. That is reasonable. Those seniors who want to stay in traditional Medicare can do that too. In the process, you can put this on a sustainable path. It has some bipartisan support. Mr. President, we don't really know the extent of that because our Democratic colleagues refuse to put a budget or mark up a budget in committee, present one on the floor.

I will close with this request, which is to vote for the motion to proceed.

Let's get on to my budget and have a debate about this, and let's see where people are. I don't know how we are ever going to reach the compromise we need to reach to put us on a sustainable path if one party is consistently putting out a whole range of ideas and the other party refuses. How do you negotiate with somebody who doesn't have a position? How do you have that discussion?

I don't know how many of my Democratic colleagues agree with the President of the United States and my own thought that we ought to ask wealthy seniors to pay a little more for Medicare benefits. If we get on the bill, we could have a debate and have amendments. I think this is too big and too important an issue not to address. The way to address it is to vote yes on the motion to proceed to get on a budget resolution, and then let's have that discussion and let the American people see it. Let's take their ideas and all of the ideas we have and see if we can make some progress.

There is an unambiguous fact that I want to underscore. There is one party showing up at this debate—the three Republican Senators who are proposing budget resolutions, comprehensive documents that address the entitlement reform we need, the discretionary spending limit we need, and the tax reform that will help grow this economy and generate the revenue we need. We have done that. As I say, it is perfectly fair and legitimate to criticize any aspect of any of that, but I think there is an obligation especially of the majority to offer its view, its alternative.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this motion to proceed and allow us to get on with addressing the single most pressing problem facing our country, which is restoring a fiscally viable path that allows us to have strong economic growth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I think we allocated 8 minutes to Senator WHITEHOUSE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. CONRAD. That was part of a unanimous consent agreement so that we could manage the time on the floor better. We have, I say to the Senator, 60 minutes left on our side. I think they have 100 minutes left on their side. We have seven Senators left.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Eight minutes just about works, from the math.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I thank the chairman, Senator CONRAD, for his leadership on this important issue.

I would note for the record that with the conclusion of Senator TOOMEY's remarks, following Senator REED, I think for the first time in the history of the Senate we had back-to-back presentations by two separate Senators who were graduates of LaSalle Academy in Providence, RI—noteworthy, perhaps, in Rhode Island.

I did note in his remarks his references to the magnitude of this challenge, to the full-blown crisis he perceives, to the completely unsustainable nature of our outward debt, that this is too big and too important not to address, and that this is the single most pressing problem our country faces—all of which might lead one to conclude that this would be the most important thing they would pursue. Yet we know it is less important to them to address our debt problem than it is to protect oil and gas subsidies for Big Oil at a time when their profits are unprecedented; it is less important than protecting tax loopholes that allow high-income individuals to incorporate themselves and avoid paying FICA taxes; it is less important to them than protecting special tax rates that allow people making $100 million a year to pay a lower tax rate than a family making $100,000 a year. So it seems that when you actually look at practice—what their priorities are—this isn't quite the priority they claim it is.

I agree there are other priorities we face as a country. This July, unless we move quickly, student loan interest rates will double, which will hurt our economy, our growth, and it will hit families across this country. We brought forward a plan to keep those rates down, but our colleagues filibustered it. Our Nation's highway program will expire next month, jeopardizing millions of jobs. We voted overwhelmingly on a bipartisan basis to reauthorize the highway bill and move forward on it, only to have our bipartisan highway bill stalled by House Republicans. Republicans may talk about jobs, but they are busily stalling the most important jobs bill we have. That stalling and delay will cost jobs because of the summer building season in so many of our States.

One thing that has not been urgent has been to pass a budget. Why is that? Well, it is because we already have one. This whole exercise today rests on a false premise. The false premise is that we have no budget. Last summer Congress passed and the President signed into law the bipartisan Budget Control Act, which sets binding discretionary spending levels for a decade and establishes budget levels for the current fiscal year and next, which our appropriations committees are now working under—Republicans and Democrats together. But you would not know this when listening to Senate Republicans. Instead of focusing on real issues, where real jobs are at stake, they are wasting a day of floor time on extremist tea party budgets. They also plan to force a vote on what they describe as the ''Obama budget.''

I plan to vote against all of the motions to proceed for the simple reason that we already have a budget in place that we voted on and agreed to for next year. Today's votes are nothing more than a Republican attempt to promote a radical and unwelcome agenda of slashing middle-class programs while protecting and enlarging tax giveaways for the ultrarich.

Let's make no mistake about what this would do to middle-class families. The House Republican budget would start by cutting taxes for big corporations and the ultrarich, adding $4.6 trillion to our national debt. To pay for these extra tax cuts, the Republicans would decimate programs on which regular American families at some point in their lives come to rely. They start by ending Medicare as we know it. Beginning for workers who retire in 2023, the House Republican budget would make it a voucher system, which, according to the nonpartisan CBO, will add an estimated $6,000 in annual out-of-pocket costs for each retiree by 2050. In Rhode Island, the average annual Social Security benefit is about $13,600. It is hard to imagine how future seniors living on a fixed Social Security income will be able to maintain health care coverage with that kind of extra cost dropped on them individually. At the same time that they would slash Medicare, the House Republican budget gives those making over $1 million per year an average tax cut of over $150,000.

If you are getting older or you are a working family and you are going to need Medicare one day, you will get an end to Medicare as we know it. If you are making over $1 million, you get an average tax cut of over $150,000. Those are not real priorities for the people I represent in Rhode Island.

It doesn't stop there. They repeal the affordable care act, which would reopen the doughnut hole. The affordable care act has helped nearly 15,000 Rhode Islanders save an average of $554 each last year just by closing the doughnut hole partway, and soon it will be all the way. That made a difference to people such as Olive in Woonsocket, whose husband fell into the doughnut hole last July. Thanks to the new law, they saved $2,400. Under the House Republican budget, they would be stuck paying that $2,400 as an out-of-pocket cost to the big drug companies.

The radical House budget would slash funding for Pell grants, and it would increase interest on student loans. We have all heard people say here that they don't want to encourage the increase in student loan rates we are facing. But while they say that, they, of course, are filibustering our effort to do that. In their budget, they build in the increase in the interest rate. So they speak from two notions.

The House budget requires only $1 trillion in additional and unspecified cuts, and that will be Draconian. Senator PAUL's budget, which we may take up today, would also slash middle-class programs, including Social Security. He includes an eventual 39 percent cut to Social Security benefits and would end Medicare for all seniors in 2014. If you want to put an end to Medicare in 2014, the Paul budget looks like a really great opportunity for you. But that is not what I think anybody really

wants in this country. I think almost every American wants to see Medicare strengthened and supported.

We should move on from this unnecessary budget messaging exercise and resume our work to keep student loan rates down and support good-paying highway jobs—bills that are being delayed that we need action on now. When we turn to a real debate about deficit reduction, I hope my colleagues will unshackle themselves from the tea party and put forward a budget that doesn't put Big Oil subsidies ahead in priority of taking care of our real budget problems. They have to get over putting the priorities first of protecting Big Oil subsidies.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator from Rhode Island. I thank him for his contributions on the Budget Committee. I don't think there has been any stronger voice for fundamental health care reform along the lines of dealing with the system we currently have that, by most accounts, is costing us hundreds of billions of dollars and not adding to the quality of health care. Nobody has been a stronger voice on the Budget Committee or off of it on that subject. I appreciate the Senator's leadership.

We have Senator WICKER next. Does the Senator have an estimate as to how much time he may consume?

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I have been told I have 10 minutes allocated, and I shall use probably less than that allocation.

Mr. CONRAD. Very well. Senator WICKER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. I thank the Chair for recognizing me and I appreciate the time.

I want to agree with my friend from Rhode Island to this extent: He said this debate is based on a false premise. And I agree with him in this respect. This is not a reality debate about a budget resolution. These are show votes. These are messaging votes we have today.

One can argue all he or she wants that we have a budget in place that we voted on last year, but there is no getting around 2 U.S.C. 631, which is the budget law of the United States of America, passed back in 1974. That budget law requires Congress each year to pass a budget resolution. As a matter of fact, it says on or before April 15 of each year, Congress completes action on a concurrent resolution on the budget.

The last time this Senate did that was in 2009. We missed the April 15 deadline in 2010, the leadership of this body missed that deadline in 2011, and they missed it again this year. It has been that long since this body, under the leadership of my friends across the aisle, have complied with the explicit terms of the Federal statute and brought a budget to full consideration on the floor.

What we will have today is debate on five concepts. I am happy to vote for some of them, and will certainly vote against others, but make no mistake about it, this is not the process called for by the Federal statute and it doesn't comply with the law and doesn't serve the purposes of advancing public policy in the United States of America. We are long overdue for a real budget debate that puts something in place.

As I mentioned a moment ago, we have passed the 3-year mark now—1,100 days—since Senate Democrats fulfilled one of their basic obligations, as I mentioned, laid out in Federal statute. A recent column in the Washington Times pointed out that the iPad had not yet even been introduced when the last budget was passed on the floor of this Senate. But since that time, in 3 years, Federal spending has topped a staggering $10 trillion.

Every day our country's debt grows closer to $16 trillion. This is money my generation will not be able to pay. We have our pages here on the floor. Even their generation will not be able to pay off this $16 trillion in debt. It will be left to their children and grandchildren. Annual deficits continue to soar, adding to that debt—over $1 trillion each year during President Obama's time in office—even though the President promised in 2009 he would cut the deficit in half during his first term, a promise that certainly has not been fulfilled. Instead, his latest budget relies more on spending, new taxes, and accounting gimmicks, and it leaves insolvent entitlement programs without meaningful reform.

I noticed the previous speaker stated he would not be voting for President Obama's budget proposal. I think it is because it is such a false and weak proposal. I expect the Obama budget today would get the same response it got on the floor of the Senate during these messaging votes last year when it failed to get a single vote. As I understand it, it failed to get a single vote in the House of Representatives. Not one Republican or Democrat in the House of Representatives earlier this year was willing to step forward and embrace the Obama budget proposal, and it got a big fat zero when it was put to a messaging vote in the House of Representatives. So we are watching a disastrous trajectory and we need to change it now.

Families, businesses, and organizations in my home State of Mississippi, and in every State across the country, know the importance of having a sensible budget and living within that budget; likewise, taxpayers deserve to see a blueprint of where their money is going and how much will be spent. Washington must be held accountable.

We heard talk on the other side of the aisle about priorities that our Democratic friends wish to see enacted. The Democratic majority in the Budget Committee needs to bring those priorities forward. They need to wrap them up in a budget resolution and bring them to the floor. That is the one thing we are not seeing today—a proposal by the Democratic majority.

It only takes 51 votes to pass a budget. There is no two-thirds rule on a budget resolution. There is no filibuster on a budget resolution. My Democratic colleagues, many of whom are dear friends of mine, have 53 Members in this caucus. They have the votes. We know a budget is required every year. Yet with a 53-vote majority, and with only 51 votes required, they do not bring a budget to the floor for us to consider so we can know what their budget priorities are.

There are plenty of excuses from across the aisle for not complying with the clear mandate, but there is no excuse. It is inexcusable that the majority party in this Chamber refuses to fulfill this statutory responsibility when the warning signs of fiscal calamity are at our doorstep.

You know, it is no wonder our popularity rating as a Congress is down around 10 or 11 percent when this Federal statute explicitly requires us to do this by April of each year and we do not do it. It is no wonder we are held in such low regard by the public. Inaction ultimately bequeaths a burden of debt to our children and grandchildren.

We certainly cannot blame the inaction on an absence of ideas. As has been stated by my friend from Rhode Island, we have five proposals before us today. President Obama's will probably get zero votes. The House Republican blueprint will be considered, and budgets from Senators LEE, PAUL, and TOOMEY. Yet the Senate Democrats, regrettably, stay on the sidelines. They have the votes, but we do not have their proposal on the floor—one they are willing to put forward and tell the American people they own.

My friend the budget chairman has suggested the upcoming election stands in the way. In April he said:

> This is the wrong time to vote in committee. This is the wrong time to vote on the floor. I don't think we will be prepared to vote before the election.

I want to make it clear, I have the highest affection and regard for the chairman of the Budget Committee, but I do believe what he is saying, in other words, is that we have a job to do, we have a law to comply with, but we are not going to bring it up at this time because of political concerns. I think political concerns are keeping our friends on the other side from saying where they stand on the budget issues. I think political concerns are keeping them from making the hard choices.

I can imagine the American taxpayer would like to know when will be the right time for the Senate to begin complying with Federal law and the right time for a budget that takes fiscal responsibility seriously. They know kicking the can down the road will not make the debt problem go away.

I noticed recently our Commander in Chief told a Russian leader that after

the election he would have more flexibility on a national security issue—the issue of national military defense. He said, I need to have some time, because after the election I will have more flexibility. Please pass that along to Vladimir. I suppose my friends on the other side of the aisle believe they will have more flexibility on spending issues and budget issues and taxation issues after the election.

The truth is Republicans and Democrats have differences on a number of issues, but that should not deter a concentrated effort to lower the deficit and curb runaway spending. I hope this week we can focus on constructive dialogue. I would have hoped we would have an honest process and do what is right and necessary to put this country's fiscal house back in order.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. I thank the Chair.

Mr. CONRAD. If I may, if the Senator could do his presentation in about 8 minutes, we have six speakers left and we have 50 minutes.

Mr. CARPER. I will be happy to do so.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, in listening to the presentation of my friend from Mississippi, I am reminded of the words of Harry Truman when he said something to the effect: The only thing new in the world is the history we forgot or never learned.

I want to go back in history. I want to go back about 15 years. We had gone from 1968 to 1997 and never balanced a budget. All those years—almost 30 years. Then President Clinton said to Erskine Bowles, his Chief of Staff, figure out a way to maybe negotiate a balanced budget deal with Republicans in the House and in the Senate and see what kind of deal you can get. So Erskine went out and negotiated and came up with a deal. It was the deficit reduction deal that lead to not one but three balanced budgets by the end of that decade. Interestingly enough, half of the debt reduction was on the spending side and half the debt reduction was on the revenue side.

Now fast forward to 2001, a new President, a change in administration, and as far as the eye could see not just balanced budgets but plenty of black ink—surpluses as far as the eye could see. Eight years later, we had another change in administration, and a new President was handed over a $1 trillion deficit, the worst recession since the Great Depression, and we are still trying to dig our way out of that. When we tried to pass legislation here to create a deficit commission a couple of years ago and failed—we were short of votes, and our Republican friends who had cosponsored that measure, as I recall, ended up not voting for it—this President used his own executive powers to say we are going to have a deficit commission and he asked Erskine Bowles to head it up, along with Alan Simpson, a former Senator and deficit hawk from Wyoming.

There were 18 good people, including some from this Chamber, who went to work on a real deficit reduction plan—Democrats and Republicans—and 11 out of the 18 ended up voting for this kind of plan. It was not a 50–50 deal on deficit reduction, but $3 on the spending side for every $1 on the revenue side, with $4 trillion to $5 trillion in deficit reduction over a 10-year period of time.

As my friend mentioned, we are seeing a lot of different ideas. We have a bunch here on the floor. The administration submitted their budget as well, and, frankly, none of them come close to being as good as Bowles-Simpson. Alice Rivlin has done good work. Pete Domenici, our former colleague here in the Senate from New Mexico, has done a good one. But in the end, they all come back to pretty much the same place. Bowles-Simpson says we are going to raise $1 in revenue for every $3 on the spending side.

The grand compromise was Democrats agreeing to entitlement programs reform—not to get rid of them but make sure they are going to be around for our children and grandchildren. And on the revenue side, we actually raise revenues by reducing the rates on the individual side and the corporate side, and we eliminated by half the so-called ''tax expenditures'' in the Tax Code—tax credits, tax reductions, tax loopholes, tax breaks. We got rid of about half of them.

So the Bowles-Simpson deficit commission plan enjoys the support of almost half the Senate—almost half the Senate. Pretty much an equal number of Democrats and Republicans. We have a budget in place right now. We have a budget in place for 2012. We have a budget that is going to be effective for 2013. Right now, we are seeing a deficit reduction of $600 billion in defense spending implemented over a 10-year period of time. Right now, we are seeing a deficit reduction of $600 billion in domestic discretionary spending implemented over a 10-year period of time. And if we don't come up with an agreement, such as Bowles-Simpson, we will see $600 billion more of deficit reduction on the defense side, another $600 billion on the nondefense side, and some entitlement program changes as well.

A much better plan than doing that—even though that adds up to about $2 trillion worth of deficit reduction for this year and the coming fiscal year—is the kind of comprehensive balanced plan we have been given by the deficit commission. My hope is, at the end of the day, when we have the opportunity to debate here—later this year, when the elections are behind us—people will actually turn around and say, let's try to figure out the right thing to do, and then do it. This is the right thing to do. In the meantime, let's not waste the next 6, 7, or 8 months.

I would suggest to my colleagues to join the bipartisan efforts of people such as TOM COBURN and myself and others, Senator CONRAD and Senator GRASSLEY and others, and to join us in going to work on a to-do list provided to us by GAO, the Government Accountability Office. That to-do list is just full of ways to avoid wasting money, and it includes ways to save money by reducing improper payments. We are down from $119 billion last year to $115 billion this year, finally heading in the right direction, reducing fraud in Medicare and Medicaid.

Some very good stuff is being done there to help reduce the fraud losses. We have all this surplus property, a lot of which we don't need. The idea is to get rid of that, and we are beginning to do that. We have too many bad information technology projects and too many information processing centers. We are getting rid of a bunch of those we don't need. There is actually some good work that is beginning to be done. We can do more, and we ought to do more.

Lastly, I would suggest we ought to consider making the President's rescission powers real. Senator MCCAIN and I and about 40, almost 45, Democrats and Republicans have proposed that we make the President's rescission powers real. The President could sign an appropriations bill under current law, send us proposals to rescind or reduce spending within that appropriations bill that he has just signed into law, and we don't even have to vote on the rescission. We don't even have to take it up or look at it. For the most part, we don't. What JOHN MCCAIN and I and almost half the Senate, Democratic and Republican, have said is, when a President signs an appropriations bill into law and sends it to us, he can send us a rescission message as well that we have to vote on, we actually have to vote on it. And it doesn't affect taxes. It is not a deal that affects entitlement programs but on appropriations, and we would try this for 4 years.

With a simple majority, we literally vote on the President's proposal. If it doesn't get a simple majority in the Senate—51 votes—or a simple majority in the House—218 votes—then it goes away. But at least we have to take responsibility to be held accountable to vote on it. The President would perhaps have some extra responsibility and the opportunity to make meaningful reductions.

Mr. President, how am I doing on time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 30 seconds.

Mr. CARPER. I want to close and say to my friend, Senator CONRAD, I know the Senator, as much as I, favors Bowles-Simpson, and I want to thank the Senator for the work he is doing in bringing attention to it again and saying this is still the best plan in the room. I think it is still the best plan out there.

So the idea is when we get to the day or the week after the election, we will be ready to move and to take it up and,

hopefully, to embrace and endorse large parts of it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator, and I thank him for his leadership on these issues. Nobody has been more serious about getting deficits and debt under control than the Senator from Delaware, Mr. CARPER.

Mr. President, how much time would Senator GRASSLEY like to use?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Ten minutes or a little less.

Mr. CONRAD. Perhaps we can ask for a unanimous consent request to lock in these next Senators so people know who is waiting.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I am not prepared to speak for our side.

Mr. CONRAD. We can do it. We have been doing this and I think it works out well.

So I ask unanimous consent that Senator GRASSLEY be recognized for 10 minutes, followed by Senator CARDIN for 8, followed by Senator CRAPO for 10 minutes.

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

The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, adopting a budget for the country is one of the most basic responsibilities and fundamental functions of the Congress.

The Budget Act of 1974 requires Congress to adopt a budget by April 15 each year. It is a requirement that this Senate majority has ignored time and again. In fact, the Senate hasn't adopted a budget since April 29, 2009.

More than 3 years have passed since the Senate last adopted a budget. During that time, more than $4 trillion has been added to our Nation's debt. In President Obama's Presidency, we have added $5 trillion to the national debt.

So we are in the midst of the fourth consecutive year of $1 trillion deficits. All the while, the Senate Democratic majority has failed to propose a budget blueprint that would lay out their priorities for deficit reduction, economic growth, and a path to balance. It is no wonder, then, our Nation is driving toward a fiscal cliff of deficits and debt. There is no one in the Democratic leadership willing to take hold of the wheel of this vehicle.

In February, President Obama released his budget. The President's 2013 budget would expand the scope of government by spending more money, increasing taxes on job creators, and continue on the path of enormous deficit and record debt.

While President Obama claims his budget will create an America built to last, the only thing his budget builds, it seems to me, is higher deficits and debt—a bigger and more intrusive government and economic decline for future generations.

During the past 60 years spending has averaged about 21 percent of GDP. Over the 10-year window of President Obama's budget, spending never gets below 22 percent. In dollar terms, spending goes up from the present $3.8 trillion to $5.8 trillion in the year 2022. So it is very clear President Obama is built to spend.

President Obama's budget is also harmful to our fragile economy because it would impose a $1.9 trillion tax increase. Maybe the President's purpose in imposing this huge tax increase is an effort to reduce the Nation's debt. Unfortunately, that is not what he has planned in his budget. He wants to spend every dollar.

His budget runs deficits totaling $6.4 trillion over the next 10 years. Debt held by the public increases from 74.2 percent of our economy today to 76.33 percent in 2022. Of course, we need to remember that the historical average since World War II has been about 43 percent of the economy.

If people believe President Obama is putting us on a path to fiscal sustainability, I would suggest that they look at the annual deficits over the next 10 years. They never drop below $575 billion, and they actually go up at the end of his budget, rising to $704 billion in 2022. President Obama's budget puts America on the course of deficits and debt as far as the eye can see into the future.

The President also took a pass on proposing any real changes to our entitlement programs, which are a real driver of future deficits and debt. Again, he is absent from the discussion. He has no solution. He has chosen not to lead. But where is the leadership from the Senate majority? Where is their budget? Why have they not proposed a budget in more than 3 years?

The budget chairman has said repeatedly that we already have a budget in place for this year and even for next year. The chairman and majority leader believe the Budget Control Act was a budget resolution. The Budget Control Act is not a budget. President Obama clearly agreed when he proposed his budget. House Republicans and Democrats alike agreed when they voted on seven budget resolutions offered by both Republicans and Democrats. The Democratic leadership in the Senate stands alone in their belief that the Budget Control Act was a budget resolution. Is it because they have no ideas on how to balance the budget, contain out-of-control spending, grow the economy, or create jobs?

If the Democratic majority can't muster the will to present their own budget, why don't they offer President Obama's budget?

I am sure we will hear the argument that the resolution our side is offering is not a fair depiction of President Obama's budget. That is the rhetoric we will likely hear so that they can vote against it. The fact is they are going to vote against it for one reason, just like a year ago; that is, because it is President Obama's budget. They don't want to be on record voting for any budget. That will be the most remarkable outcome of today's exercise.

We are going to vote on five different budget proposals. Three are being offered by Senate Republicans, one is Budget Chairman RYAN's budget, and the final resolution is President Obama's budget. Not only have Senate Democrats failed to even propose a budget, they will likely vote in lockstep against each of the five budget proposals.

We are likely to see Senate Democrats come to the floor one by one and cast roughly 265 votes against the consideration of any budget. Is that leadership? Is that conviction? They are in the majority. When it comes to proposing and supporting a budget, they are the party of no and the party of obstruction. Democrats are the party filibustering consideration of budget blueprints. My friend, the budget chairman, was quoted recently as saying:

> This is the wrong time to vote in committee. This is the wrong time to vote on the floor. I don't think we will be prepared to vote before the election.

How many more trillions do we need to add to the national debt before it is time to vote on a budget resolution? If now is not the time to lead, propose bold solutions and take action, when is?

The American people are going to pay a heavy price for the unwillingness and inability of the Senate majority to lead and to offer solutions. Once again, the Senate majority and its leadership and President Obama are content to be absent from the discussion. Three years without this sort of debate is proof of that. There are no solutions; there is no leadership. There is only failure and punting until after the next election.

We have a moral obligation to offer serious solutions for today—most importantly for future generations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, the budget document is a very important document.

It speaks to the priorities of our Nation, and it gives instructions to our committees to report out legislation consistent with that of the budget resolution. It gives instructions to the Appropriations Committee to pass appropriations bills and to other committees as it may affect revenues or mandatory spending.

We have that budget document for the fiscal year that begins October 1 of this year. That was included in the Budget Control Act which passed this body by 74 votes. It has the force and effect of law.

So our appropriations committees know the numbers for the appropriations bills for the year that begins October 1, and the other committees know what the requirements will be. The question is whether we should have a longer term commitment on dealing with our budget problems.

We do need a bipartisan, credible program that involves not only the Democrats and Republicans in the Senate,

but also the Democrats and Republicans in the House, and the President of the United States. We need to avoid sequestration, and we need the predictability for our economy and for those who act upon our actions to know what the rules will be. We need to have a responsible plan to deal with the long-term deficit that is balanced and fair, that involves more revenue and spending cuts, that allows our recovery to continue, and is bipartisan.

I compliment Senator CONRAD for his leadership in giving us an opportunity to move in that direction. I think Senator CONRAD showed tremendous leadership on behalf of the Democratic members of the Budget Committee to forgo bringing forward a partisan budget and instead said: Let's take a look at a long-term budget that can get bipartisan support, that has been tested, that has been out there, and that is called Bowles-Simpson.

We are talking about the broad outline. A budget document gives broad instructions to the committee. It is the so-called macro numbers. I think the chairman has provided us the leadership on that issue. But do not get confused, we have a budget for the fiscal year that begins October 1. We have it earlier than we have ever had it, and it has the force and effect of law.

Each of the four Republican plans that we will be voting on moves us in the wrong direction to accomplishing those goals. They use almost all of the spending cuts that are included in these budgets for additional tax cuts. It benefits primarily those who do not need an additional tax cut. The House Republican budget would provide $1 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthiest among us, giving millionaires an average tax cut of $150,000. At the same time, that budget would ask our college students to pay more by allowing interest rates on their loans to increase, and they would ask our seniors to pay more by paying more for their Medicare benefits.

They have it backward. Those who have sacrificed the most during these economic times under Republican budgets would be asked to pay more. Those who have benefited the most during that period of time would get additional tax cuts. That is not what we should be doing. It would hurt our economic recovery.

It is irresponsible to make the types of cuts that are in the Republican budget that deal with American innovation. Take a look what it would do for basic research in this country, which I hope we all agree is necessary for America to continue to lead the world in innovation. In my own State of Maryland I look at the jobs we created in the biotech field, through cybersecurity. Basic research is critically important to advance those job opportunities and economic opportunities for America. It would reduce our commitments to building our infrastructure—our transit systems, our roads, our energy grids. If we are going to be competitive, we need to rebuild America to meet the global challenges.

It would reduce our commitments in education. An educated workforce is America's future. Investing in our children is what we should be doing. The quality of K–12 would suffer, even pre-K—what they do with Head Start—and I already mentioned the cost of student loans in postsecondary education would go up. For our seniors, they would be thrown into a voucher program in Medicare at the mercy of private insurance companies and asked to pay more when they are already overburdened by the costs of their health care.

Under the Toomey budget, they would block-grant Medicaid, throwing that burden onto our States. Our children and families would suffer.

Under the Paul budget, Social Security benefits would be reduced on average by 39 percent. Social Security is a vital lifeline for the people of this country. Turning it into a program that becomes a political football is not what we need for this country. For our students, the cost of a college education would be increased.

We need to put forward a credible plan to reduce the deficit. We need to do this—and we have done it before. When Bill Clinton was President of the United States and I was serving in the House of Representatives, we passed a plan that balanced our Federal budget and actually created a surplus. How did we do it? We did it through a balanced approach. We did it through cutting spending and raising the revenues so we paid our bills. What were the results? Our economy took off, creating millions of jobs. That is what we need to do again.

How do we get this done? Let's get working together. Let's have Democrats and Republicans work together in order to come up with a balanced approach that has spending cuts and those who can afford to pay more should be paying more because it is not fair to future generations for us to spend money today and ask our children and grandchildren to pay for it tomorrow.

Let us protect the programs that are important for economic growth, for the dignity of our seniors, and for the welfare of our children. It starts with rejecting the extreme partisan budgets that our Republican colleagues are offering on the floor. I urge my colleagues to reject those budget resolutions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I appreciate the efforts by our Republican leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, and by the ranking member of our Senate Budget Committee, JEFF SESSIONS, to give the Senate a chance today to do its job. It has been more than 3 years since the Senate has passed a budget, almost 1,100 days, $4 trillion in increased debt since we last had a budget. Yet it seems as if the current majority are the only ones who do not think passing a budget is part of our job.

I have to stop here for a moment and commend the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, Senator CONRAD. I know he has fought mightily to get a budget to this floor. But the politics he faces have not allowed him to do so. As of today, for 1,100 days we have not been able to see a budget proposal reach the Senate floor from our committee.

I have worked with Senator CONRAD long and hard and will continue to do so, trying to get a broad, bipartisan solution brought forward. But today we need to take action on the Senate floor. Everyone else has a budget. The President has offered a budget. The House Republicans have offered a budget. The House Democrats have offered a budget. The Senate Republicans have introduced several budgets, which we will vote on here today.

Every American family and every American business has to develop a budget. Previous Congresses, including those that enacted the Congressional Budget Act last year, clearly saw the importance of Congress enacting a budget every year. In fact, it was that congressional budget act that we were able to get in place last year that put into effect the mechanism we are employing today which says if the majority party leadership fails to bring a budget forward by the statutory deadline, then any Senator has the right to call for consideration of any budget on the Senate Calendar.

Let's look at the budgets we will be voting on today. First we have the President's budget. At a time when our national debt is more than $15.6 trillion, well more than 100 percent of our gross domestic product, the President's budget seemingly makes no acknowledgment of the dramatic and predictable fiscal crisis we face. Instead of embracing the comprehensive work of his own fiscal commission, the Bowles-Simpson commission on which I served, or any of the other key bipartisan proposals that are available such as the Ryan-Wyden proposal or the Domenici-Rivlin plan or even coming up with a true reform plan of his own, the President's budget regrettably remains within the old discredited framework of trying to tax and spend our way into prosperity.

The President's budget would raise taxes by $2 trillion. This is in addition to the $1.2 trillion of tax increases in the health care law which are just beginning to take effect and will continue to roll out over the next few years. Perhaps even more remarkable, the President's budget actually increases spending by $1.2 trillion more than current law. So another $1.2 trillion in new spending, another $2 to $3 trillion in new taxes, no structural entitlement reform, and no discretionary spending reform.

Even though it is widely acknowledged that the current paths of our entitlement programs are unsustainable

and even though they are on track to soon become insolvent, the President's budget has no comprehensive reforms to our entitlement programs—none. The modest amount of health care savings he does propose would not even be enough to offset the extension of the doc fix or the other increases in the health care spending he proposes.

This is a dangerous approach, and it should be noted that this budget failed by a vote of 0 to 414 in the House. Yet we have no other pending proposal from the other side to consider.

Today the Senate will also have an opportunity to reject the President's approach to the Federal budget, and I expect it will do so, just as it did last time. Because the Democratic majority here in the Senate has failed to produce their own budget, we will also have the opportunity to vote on some important budget proposals offered by the House Budget Committee chairman and by our own colleagues here in the Senate, Senators TOOMEY, PAUL, and LEE. Each of these proposals would include true comprehensive reforms to our entitlement programs to prevent the impending insolvency and to protect the programs for current and future generations, and would put us on a sustained pathway to balancing our Federal budget.

These budgets also call for comprehensive tax reform which takes us out of the old paradigm of Congress debating whether to raise or cut taxes and, instead, these proposals would each in their own way dramatically streamline the Tax Code, reduce the tax rates, and unleash significant economic growth in our economy. A byproduct of this robust economic growth would be an increase in revenues to help us deal with our pending debt crisis.

I again commend the chairman, Senator CONRAD, for his effort to bring forward a comprehensive plan, a solution—one that originated with Bowles-Simpson on which he and I sat and one which has then been worked on by the so-called Gang of Six for a significant amount of time now to improve and bring forward, and one which the chairman is prepared to move when the opportunity is available. I have encouraged him to do it now. I believe we ought to have it on the floor today for this debate. But whenever the time becomes available, it is a proposal such as this that we need to be dealing with. We need to develop the bipartisan support that is necessary to pass it.

What is it? First of all, as we worked on the Bowles-Simpson commission, we made some basic decisions. We concluded that spending was the major problem—that is where the major part of the solution should be—but that revenue was also critical to the solution and that growing our economy was an important part of anything Congress should do. We first discussed putting together a strong approach to entitlement reform, structural entitlement reform. We put strong spending caps in place and we made clear that our spending patterns in the Federal budget would be brought under control. In addition, recognizing the importance and need for strong growth, we concluded that our Tax Code must be reformed and not on the traditional battleground of whether to raise taxes on one group or lowering taxes on another but in a complete paradigm shift to focus on the reforming of both our corporate and individual tax codes.

If you went about trying to create a Tax Code that was more unfair, more complex, more expensive to comply with, and more anticompetitive to our own American business interests, you would be hard pressed to do it different or worse than we have done with our own Tax Code. We concluded that we ought to reform that code to develop a strong, dynamic tax code for America to go forward with. That is why we proposed broadening the base, reducing the rates, and reforming the way we tax in America by simplifying our Tax Code and making America a strong, powerful, and robust economy as it historically has been.

Then we put together what is critical for any plan to succeed, and that is an enforcement mechanism. Congress has a perfect record of violating its own budgets. Congress has a record of ignoring the budgets, simply getting 60 votes to waive the Budget Act whenever Congress wants to spend in excess of a budget. Literally in every budget for the last two decades or more, Congress has done so; Republican or Democratic, the Congresses have done so. What we put together in our negotiations was an enforcement plan that would keep Congress within the walls of the budget we adopt. It would have a series of points of order to protect against the declaration of emergencies unjustifiably and would then force even emergency spending, that usually is conducted outside the budget, to be done in the face of a sequestration backed up by 67-vote points of order on the floor of the Senate. This kind of strong enforcement is also critical to what we must do to protect our Nation.

We need a comprehensive plan, we need to have entitlement reform, we have to have discretionary spending reform, and we need to have budget enforcement that is solid. We need to strengthen our revenue stream and enforce our Tax Code by lowering taxes. That gives American businesses the opportunity to compete aggressively across the globe.

If we do so, we will see a strong revenue component to our reform measures, and we will see strong growth coming out of the fact that we put together effective spending controls. But we have to get there. We have to do it.

I appreciate the opportunity to work with Senator CONRAD as we try to put this kind of broad, comprehensive reform package together and build bipartisan support for it. But I am very discouraged still that we cannot get a budget proposal onto the floor of the Senate that we can work on.

I also appreciate the leadership of Senator MCCONNELL and Senator SESSIONS, who have given the Senate the opportunity today to debate this issue and have votes, at least, on meaningful proposals that move us down the path I have discussed, and put us onto a pathway for economic prosperity and growth for all.

America is at a terrible crisis point. Our national debt is now exceeding over 100 percent of our GDP and threatens our economy. We must take action. We cannot let another year go by without adopting a budget on the floor of the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. I would say to Senator BOXER the situation we find ourselves in is we only have 34 minutes left on our side. I will yield 7 minutes to Senator BOXER.

Senator MURRAY is here now.

Mrs. BOXER. I will wait.

Mr. CONRAD. We have a situation in which our time is rapidly fleeting. They have much more time left on their side than we do on ours.

Could the Senator do her presentation in 7 minutes?

Mrs. MURRAY. I will attempt to do my best.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator MURRAY be allowed to speak for 7 minutes followed by Senator BOXER for 7 minutes.

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

The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to thank Senator CONRAD for his leadership on this issue. At the end of last week, the Republicans in the House of Representatives passed legislation that continues their mad dash away from the bipartisan Budget Control Act and reflects the upside-down priorities that are guiding their party and stands absolutely no chance of passage in the Senate.

I think it would be very helpful at this point to remind my colleagues of the recent history that has brought us to this point.

In August of last year Democrats and Republicans came together, and we agreed to the Budget Control Act to cut spending and put in place a process for additional deficit reduction. The purpose of that bipartisan agreement was to move toward serious deficit reduction and to give some consistency to the Federal budget so the American people would not be threatened with a government shutdown every few months. That bipartisan deal sets the levels for next year's discretionary spending, which allows Congress to do its jobs and work to allocate Federal resources toward investments in jobs, infrastructure, innovation, maintaining our commitment to our servicemembers and their families, and protecting and supporting the middle-class families and so much more.

That was the agreement we came to. Speaker BOEHNER shook on it, Minority Leader MCCONNELL shook on it, Majority Leader REID signed it, joined many of my colleagues in voting for it, and then President Obama signed it into law. It became the law of the land. I would add it is binding and replaces and carries more weight than a budget resolution. It makes the budget resolutions we are debating today nothing more than political theater.

Senate Democrats fully intend to honor our word and stick to the bipartisan budget levels for next year, and Senate Republicans in our Appropriations Committee, including the minority leader, recently voted to stick to those levels as well. I was disappointed that less than 9 months after we shook hands on that deal House Republicans turned right around and broke it. They put appeasing their extreme base ahead of the word they gave to us and the American people. They demonstrated clearly that a deal with them isn't worth the paper it is printed on.

Despite House Republicans reneging on the deal, the Budget Control Act is the law. It is signed, and we have so many challenges ahead of us as a nation we cannot afford to relitigate bipartisan deals every time members of the extreme end of the Republican Party make some noise in a meeting. House Republicans are not only trying to relitigate that Budget Control Act, they want to pretend it never happened.

As part of that deal, in addition to the $1 trillion in discretionary spending cuts, a joint select committee on deficit reduction was formed to reduce the deficit by at least an additional $1.2 trillion. In fact, if they couldn't come to an agreement, the bipartisan Budget Control Act put in place automatic spending cuts, or sequestration, which spread evenly across defense and nondefense spending.

We all knew at the time the sequestration was not the ideal way to reduce spending, but we wanted to have that in place so that painful cuts were prominent and would help both sides to come to a bipartisan compromise.

I was called on by the majority leader to cochair that committee with Republican Representative JEB HENSARLING, and I am proud of that committee's hard work. I was extremely disappointed in the end that committee was not able to come up with a bipartisan deal.

I want to be clear—because this is very relevant today—we weren't able to get a deal because Republicans refused to even consider tax increases on the wealthiest Americans. The talks fell apart around that issue and that issue alone.

I came to the table with many of my colleagues with proposals for serious compromises on spending and a willingness to move forward with smart changes to strengthen entitlements. We knew many of these compromises would be painful, but we were willing to put them forward to get to a bipartisan deal and a balanced deal. But as much as we offered, we couldn't get our Republican colleagues to give an inch when it came to taxes on the wealthiest Americans and the biggest corporations even though the rich are paying the lowest tax rates today in generations. They were fundamentally opposed to any plan that would call on the wealthy to pay a penny more in taxes.

In poll after poll Americans overwhelmingly say they want to see a balanced approach to tackling the deficit and debt that puts everything on the table, including revenue. Every single bipartisan group that has come together to tackle this—from Simpson-Bowles, Domenici-Rivlin, Gang of 6—has included a balanced approach that reduces spending and raises revenues. That is the only real and fair way to tackle this challenge, and it simply doesn't make any sense to solve this problem with cuts alone.

So as we watch House Republicans rolling back the automatic cut they don't like and acting as though the bipartisan Budget Control Act never happened, I say to them today what I said to the Republicans in the joint select committee: We will not allow the debt and deficit to be reduced on the backs of our middle-class and most vulnerable Americans without calling on the wealthiest to contribute as well. It is not fair, it is not what the American people want, and it is not going to happen. We are facing these automatic cuts because Republicans continue to protect the rich above all else. Unless that changes before the end of the year, our country is going to have to face the consequences of intransigence.

Republicans in the House of Representatives are not only acting as though the BCA never happened, they are highlighting the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of a party that allows itself only to think in terms of cutting, shrinking, eliminating, and never in terms of investing and growing and fairness. The legislation they passed would roll back sequestration for next year by simply taking funding from programs middle-class families and the most vulnerable Americans count on and shifting it to defense. They want all of the deficit reduction from the Budget Control Act without any bipartisan compromise or shared sacrifice.

Since they refuse to consider raising taxes on the wealthy, the only way they can increase spending on defense is by absolutely devastating critical government investments in our families and in our future.

According to a report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the House legislation would not only roll back sequestration on the defense side, it would increase overall defense spending by over $8 billion.

And while they may say they are rolling back the automatic cuts on non-defense spending too, this report shows House Republicans are slashing these programs almost three-quarters of the way to what would be cut under sequestration.

Since they need to find a way to pay to undo the automatic cuts they don't like, their bill cuts even deeper into programs millions of families across America count on.

According to that same CBPP report, the Republican legislation would cut food assistance to the most vulnerable families, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and block grants for States to run programs to help families and workers get back on their feet.

So House Republicans are actually increasing defense spending, protecting the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations, and throwing the entire burden on the backs of middle class families and the most vulnerable Americans.

That's not just bad policy, it is simply wrong.

If Democrats were willing to accept a wildly imbalanced deficit reduction plan to avoid the automatic cuts, we would have done that in the Joint Select Committee. But we didn't then, and we won't now.

Any bipartisan deficit reduction plan, whether the goal is to reduce the deficit in a better way than the sequesters or to put our country on sound fiscal footing over the long term, has to be balanced. It has to be fair. And it has to work for middle class families across America. That means responsibly cutting spending. It means making sure entitlement programs that seniors and the most vulnerable families depend on are strengthened and secured for the next generation. It means examining where we can save money on the defense side. And it means raising revenue from the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations who are paying close to the lowest levels in generations.

Because budgets aren't just numbers on a page. They aren't just about charts and formulas and trajectories. Those are important but budgets are also about real people, with real lives. They are about investments in our families, our communities, and our economy. They are about the kind of country we want to be now and in the our future. And above all, budgets are about the choices and priorities of a nation.

Democrats are willing to make compromises. We are willing to have those tough conversations and come to the difficult agreements we know are necessary. We are willing to put everything on the table.

And I truly hope Republicans decide they are ready to do the same and end their commitment to protecting the rich from paying a penny more in taxes. Because while so many families continue to struggle, I think it's more than fair to ask the richest Americans to pay their fair share.

While we scour programs that so many middle class families rely on for

fat to trim, I think it makes sense to scour the tax code in just the same way and eliminate the egregious loopholes that the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations take advantage of.

And while oil and gas companies are making record profits, I think it just makes sense to end the handouts they get every year from U.S. taxpayers.

So Democrats stand ready to work with Republicans on this. But what House Republicans did last week has moved us in the wrong direction, and makes it even harder to get to the bipartisan deficit reduction deal they say they want.

So I urge them to end this partisanship.

Stop allowing a small and extreme minority of members to dictate policy for an entire chamber of Congress. Stop protecting the wealthiest Americans from sharing in the sacrifices so many Americans are making every day, and to truly work with us to get this done for the American people.

As soon as that happens, Democrats stand ready to get to a balanced and bipartisan deal.

The choices we make as a body in the coming months will affect every single American. As we have said from the start, we will put everything on the table, but that word is ''everything.'' We cannot come to a solution in America unless everybody contributes and there is shared sacrifice. That is the principle we have been fighting for, it is the one we will continue to fight for, and that is what the American people want. I am proud to stand with my party to continue to fight for that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise to say that it is stunning to see the Republican Party running away from a bill they supported and a deal they cut. The deficit reduction deal was led by Senator CONRAD. The Budget Control Act is the law of the land. Instead they are offering up a series of budgets that I believe will destroy this country.

Why do I say that? Because they destroy the middle class and they give to the millionaires and the billionaires. That is a recipe for a third world nation, the haves and the have-nots. I hope the American people wake up and pay attention because a budget is a statement of who we are as a people.

I was proud to serve on the Budget Committee. I wish I was still on there, but I had other options for my State. I decided to leave the Budget Committee and go on the Commerce Committee. That is one tough committee, and we are going to miss Senator CONRAD. His leadership is exemplary, and he has explained why the replacement budgets the Republicans have offered are unworkable. Some of them don't even make any sense.

This is serious business because one of them did pass the House. Not only did it pass the House, but then they passed another law, and we call it reconciliation, which is dangerous in what they did. They stood with all of their heart, with all of their soul, with all of their power and their fervor to fight for the 1 percent. They are fighting for the millionaires, the multimillionaires, the billionaires, and the trillionaires; that is who they are fighting for. They are giving them back an average of $150,000 a year. Over the 10-year period that average millionaire can write a big kiss to the Republicans if this ever becomes law because they would get back $1.5 million over the 10-year period.

How do they pay for this largess? How do they pay for this warm, fuzzy hug to the people who have everything? They cut the heart out of the middle class. I will give some examples. They would allow student loan rates to double so students would have to pay not a 3-percentage point interest rate on their student loans but over 6 percent.

They will cut the heart and soul out of America's infrastructure. Did you ever look at the construction industry lately? Well, there are 1.4 million unemployed construction workers. We need to make sure they are building the roads, highways, and the 70,000 bridges that are deficient. Half of our roads don't meet the standards. We need to rebuild America, as the President said—not Afghanistan, not Pakistan. Thank you very much. Iraq? The blood of our people is on the ground over there. It is time to spend that money here as our President has said.

They continue all that war spending, they add to that war spending, and they expect everybody else to stand back and quietly accept a doubling of their student loan rate and a cut in the transportation program.

They end Medicare, period. They are going to turn it into a voucher system, and our elderly are going to have to negotiate to try and find a way to pay for health insurance, and it will cost them thousands of dollars more.

One of these budgets actually cuts Social Security by 39 percent. Imagine a Social Security recipient living on $18,000 getting a cut of almost 40 percent.

So this is what they are doing, I say to my colleagues. They eliminate the Department of Education. They eliminate the ability for many people to pay for their energy assistance in the winters. They walk away from alternative energy, which is going to free us from foreign oil and make us safer. That is what they do, and they do it all in the name of tax breaks for the people in America who—I am very proud of them. They made it. In my State, a lot of those folks who have made it have written to me and said: Senator, we want everybody to have the chance we had.

The only passion of Republicans is for those who have. They practice Robin Hood in reverse. In one of the budgets, they even—I think it is the Ryan budget—tax the poorest people. They tax the poorest people. They raise taxes on the poorest people, and they cut taxes on the richest people. Robin Hood in reverse. Isn't that sweet? Isn't that kind? Not. So they bring America to its knees. They walk away from the Budget Control Act. Do we know why they don't like it? Because it forces spending cuts across the board. I don't like that, but we are serious about deficit reduction.

In my closing remarks I will say this: In the last 40 years, one party balanced the budget. In the last 40 years, one party created a surplus. That happens to be the Democratic Party and a Democratic President named Bill Clinton. How did we do it? We met each other halfway. We said that when we are faced with a crisis, we have to put everything on the table and everybody makes a little bit of a sacrifice. It is no big deal. We ask the people who have the most to do a little more, and we find ways to cut spending. That is what we did in the Clinton years. Do we know what happened? We created I think 23 million new jobs. We created 23 million new jobs. We balanced the budget, we created a surplus, and now we have to listen to the demagogues over there lecture us about how to balance the budget. Wrong. We know how to do it. They don't know how to do it. All they know how to do is stand up and attack our President when our President inherited this terrible deficit from George W. Bush, who took a surplus—Bush did—and turned it into deficits as far as the eye can see. And we were losing—I ask unanimous consent for 30 additional seconds.

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

Mrs. BOXER. We were losing how many jobs a month? We were losing 800,000 jobs a month when our President took over. The country was falling apart.

He saved the auto industry—it is back on top—when others said: Let them go bankrupt. He started the job creation. It is not good enough, but I will tell my colleagues one thing: If we are going to make it better, we better start working together.

Let's live by the Budget Control Act that is the law of the land, and let's use that time to find a long-term solution, as we did in the Clinton years.

Thank you very much. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I wish to make a reference to the Budget Control Act. One of my colleagues said we are running away from the Budget Control Act. I would suggest that is not accurate. In truth, the Budget Control Act was a cap on spending, and the Republicans have proposed that we spend less than that, as any economist would tell us we need to do because it wasn't sufficient.

The difficulty arises, however, when we consider what President Obama proposed with regard to the Budget Control Act. It is amazing. In August President Obama signed the Budget

Control Act as an agreement to raise the debt ceiling by $2.1 trillion in exchange for reducing spending by $2.1 trillion. He signed that, it went into effect, and it is the current law today. But when he proposed his budget in January of this year that we will vote on later today—and I expect it will not get a single vote, and it should not—President Obama's budget wiped out half of those savings. So $1 trillion of those savings were wiped out, and he replaced it with almost—he added more spending in addition—Mr. President, I am having a little trouble thinking here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order. The Senate will suspend for a moment.

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. So I think the dramatic event that has gone unappreciated is that the President's budget eviscerates the Budget Control Act and puts us back on full speed tax and spend.

I see my colleague Senator ENZI is here, a senior member of the Budget Committee who has been involved in so many important issues. He is an accountant, a small businessman, and he understands the real world and the value of a dollar. I yield to Senator ENZI.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I thank the ranking member of the committee for all of his work on this issue and the suggestions he has as to the importance of what we are doing today.

I rise today to discuss our Nation's budget situation and the budget proposals we will vote on later today. While I am pleased that my colleagues have put forth a number of good ideas, this debate is long overdue.

The Congressional Budget Act sets a statutory deadline of April 1 for the Senate Budget Committee to report a budget resolution and a deadline of April 15 for completion of a congressional budget. Despite these statutory deadlines, it has been more than 3 years since the Senate passed a budget, and the majority party once again refuses to debate this important topic through the normal budget process. We did not mark up a budget in the Senate Budget Committee, and we have not been given the opportunity to offer amendments to any of the budgets that are before us on the Senate floor. That is disappointing.

With a national debt approaching $16 trillion, and it is hard for me to even say $16 trillion—I saw a kid with a t-shirt that said, ''Please don't tell him what comes after $1 trillion.'' With $16 trillion in debt, we cannot afford to continue operating without a budget that is a blueprint to put the country on a sustainable path in both the short term as well as the long term, and we better be looking at that long term as well.

We cannot continue to simply spend money we don't have without a plan to get our spending under control. We are so bad on spending that we are taking 10 years' worth of revenue to pay for 2 years' worth of projects, and those are projects that will continue after that. I don't know what we do after the 2 years. How far out can we borrow money that may not even come in because it might not even be budgeted? A budget is supposed to do just that—it is supposed to put spending under control. But instead, for the third year in a row, it looks as if the Senate majority will refuse to pass a plan to help fix the fiscal crisis we face.

In the 3 years since the Senate majority passed a budget, our country has spent approximately $10.4 trillion. We have accumulated around $4.5 trillion in gross debt, which translates to an additional $15,000 for every man, woman, and child—$15,000 for every man, woman, and child—which brings it up to about $49,000 total for every man, woman, and child. Since we last adopted a budget, we have spent more than $626 billion on net interest payments to service the debt alone. These are unsustainable levels of spending. Yet the majority continues to ignore the problem and refuses to take these numbers seriously and consider, much less pass, a budget.

The majority argues that we have a budget in place because of the passage of the Budget Control Act, which also governed our spending in fiscal year 2011. But if that truly governed what we are doing, why did the President even submit a budget to us? If that was the budget, he shouldn't have gone to all the effort to put his own budget together. But he felt he needed to put a budget together.

In fiscal year 2011, the government brought in slightly more than $2.3 trillion in revenue. At the same time we collected $2.3 trillion, we spent $3.6 trillion. In other words, we overspent by $1.3 trillion. That is more than 50 percent of the revenue we were expecting. We are on pace for another $1 trillion deficit this year. The Budget Control Act may include some spending limits, but with record trillion-dollar deficits, the Budget Control Act cannot replace an actual budget that puts in place long-term spending cuts and helps get our country back on the path to balance. Again, if that Budget Control Act really took care of everything, the President would not have needed to submit a budget. He did.

I applaud the President for appointing a deficit commission. We tried to pass that as a bill. It came close, but it didn't make it. He saw there was a need, and he appointed a commission. The commission was cochaired by Erskine Bowles and Senator Alan Simpson. They painted a pretty bleak picture for our country. More than a year and a half has gone by since they painted that bleak picture, and it has gotten worse, not better. I really expected at the State of the Union that year that the President would have painted the same bleak picture he had been handed by the deficit commission. It was scary. It is now scarier. But he didn't. Instead, he gave us another stimulus budget. I think if he had painted the bleak picture in the State of the Union that was handed to him by the deficit commission, if he had painted that same picture and not placed a solution out there but painted the picture so America would understand where we are with the debt and the deficit—if he had done that, he could have come out with a budget that was parallel to what Simpson-Bowles had, and I think we would have had a solution over a year ago.

We have a nearly $16 trillion debt that keeps growing. It is unaffordable, and we need to make a change. What will happen if we don't act and if we don't cut spending? We won't be able to afford the military we need. People will have drastically reduced Social Security checks. Roads won't be fixed. All of our money will go toward paying interest on the debt.

People shouldn't doubt that this is real. There were riots in the streets in Greece when their government was forced to deal with the realities of debt. In the United States, we owe $49,000 for every man, woman, and child. In Greece, they only owe $39,000 and had to make drastic cuts, and they had riots in the streets. Now they have stepped back with the recent elections and are trying to turn away from the reality of their debt. Does that sound familiar?

I have news for my colleagues. Our debt per person, as I mentioned, is more than Greece's debt per person. It is more than Italy's debt per person. In fact, the United States owes more than all of the Euro countries and the United Kingdom put together.

My Republican colleagues and I have put forth a series of budgets that would help to improve the fiscal situation. I drafted legislation that would reduce spending by 1 percent per year until we reach balance. By reducing spending by 1 percent, we can achieve balance by fiscal year 2017. That is a 1-percent reduction per year to 2017, and most of the people I have talked to—and I have talked to a lot of people in Wyoming and some other places around the country—have said 1 percent is not bad. One percent is definitely not bad if we compare it to the possibility of a 19-percent cut when we step off the cliff.

The House of Representatives passed a budget last year that cut spending by $5.8 trillion. This year the House passed a second budget that would reduce the deficit by $4.4 trillion, in comparison to the President's budget over the next decade, which does nothing to improve the short- or long-term economic outlook of the country. In fact, President Obama's budget would make things worse.

Senator TOOMEY has put together a detailed budget plan that would balance the budget within 8 years. It would enact corporate tax reform, and it would adopt important changes to

the entitlement programs that are the drivers of the Nation's unsustainable debt.

Senator PAUL has put forth a budget that would balance within 5 years. Of course, it eliminates four departments and reduces spending by $8 trillion over the next 10 years. It seems radical, but we are facing a cliff, and he is willing to put a budget out there.

Senator LEE has also introduced a budget that balances our budget by fiscal year 2017 by cutting spending by $7.1 trillion over the next 10 years, and it, too, reforms Medicare and Social Security.

Why do we have to reform Medicare? Well, in the health care reform bill we took $½ trillion out of Medicare. It was already going broke but, don't worry, we put in a special panel that will tell where cuts can come from each and every year, and if we don't suggest different cuts, those go into effect without a vote of the U.S. Senate. The only places they can cut are doctors, hospitals, nursing homes, home health care, and other providers. If you do not have a doctor, I do not think you have much medical care.

There are going to have to be reforms in Medicare. We have already forced that. For Social Security, there are not as many people working now as will soon be on Social Security, and that creates problems. I do not agree with everything that is included in these budgets I have mentioned, but I want to commend my Republican colleagues for making tough choices and putting forth solutions.

While they have been doing that, President Obama and the Senate majority have ignored the problem and refused to acknowledge the need to cut spending. They have demonized Republicans and suggested it is our intention to harm seniors, poor people, and children. One advertisement showed a picture of House Budget Chairman RYAN pushing an elderly woman off a cliff. That kind of rhetoric does not help anything, that rhetoric is over the top, while their solutions have been nonexistent.

Last year, President Obama's budget was such an empty proposal that it failed by a vote of 0 to 97 in the Senate. In the House this year, his latest budget failed by a vote of 0 to 414. I suspect it may face the same fate when it is considered later today—the same one they voted on. Not a single Member of either party was willing to support the President's budget proposal. How is that for leadership?

In some of the countries that have a parliamentary form of government, they have heard about these votes and are terribly shocked because in their country it would call for a special election and a new Prime Minister.

We will be voting on five budgets later today—four from Republican Members and President Obama's budget. Absent from the discussion is a budget produced by the Senate majority that is shirking their responsibility to govern.

We are in too serious a situation to continue ignoring the budget problems we face. At a time when the national debt breaks down to more than $49,000 for every person in Wyoming and across this country, we cannot afford to continue business as usual. We cannot continue punting the tough decisions simply because the tough decisions might impact our reelection campaigns. The decisions that are painful today will be even more painful in the future.

We talk about pay-fors here when people want to do a new program or continue an old program with additional expenses, but we better start including the debt. Our debt is greater than the value of everything we produce in this country in a year. That is the gross national product. The debt is greater than the gross national product. There are a lot of stories about what happens when your debt gets greater than the gross national product, and none of them is good.

I have heard from a lot of people in Wyoming about the national debt and the lack of a budget for more than 3 years. While they have differing viewpoints on the best solution, they have one common message: Do something. Do something, and do it as soon as possible. I am concerned that, after votes, we will end up in the same place we started—without a budget and without a fiscal plan to get our Nation's debt and deficit in check. I do not know about you, but it is keeping me up nights.

Some of my colleagues have offered plans to make that happen. Those who control the Senate appear content to sit on the sidelines and criticize. While that happens, we continue to add trillions of dollars to our national debt. I would encourage my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to think about what that means to future generations and join us in finding a plan to fix our fiscal woes.

I know that is what they are thinking about because I have been in meetings off of the Hill where they have talked about this same thing. But we have to solve it; we cannot just talk about it. We cannot give it lip service when we are off of the floor and excuse it when we are on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, before Senator ENZI leaves the floor, he made reference to the fact that in the European parliamentary system, when a Prime Minister proposes a budget that fails, that would be cause for collapse of the government and a new election.

He also correctly recalled how the deficit commission that was appointed by President Obama came back with a number of recommendations that would have gone far farther than the President's budget in dealing with our debt course.

But I would ask the Senator about that moment he mentioned, after the debt commission reported, when the President came before the joint session of Congress to give the State of the Union. Was the Senator surprised and disappointed that the President virtually ignored the debt commission and did not take the opportunity to explain to the whole audience of the American people that we are on an unsustainable course that could lead to financial catastrophe?

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I was both surprised and disappointed. I thought he had a unique opportunity, and it had been handed to him on a platter that he designed. He appointed these people, and they put a lot of hours into it, including the Senator from North Dakota, who is here on the floor, and came up with a plan. It was not a pleasant plan by anybody's imagination. It was an important plan by everybody's—well, evidently not everybody or we would have adopted it by now. But it had some critical things in there that should be taken care of, that should be considered in a budget, and should have leadership coming from the White House. That is where leadership on budgets happens.

I remember being in the Wyoming legislature. We have a requirement that you have to balance the budget each and every year, and we do that. If you find out there is going to be a deficit before the legislature meets—and they only meet for 20 days in the budget year—if you know about it before that time, then the legislature has to make those cuts. One of the things I noted was when we made the cuts, the people in the administration picked out something that was painful and made that cut so the constituents out there would say: Oh, that really hurt. Those stupid legislators picked the wrong things. Well, it was not the legislators who picked the wrong things. It was the people in charge of each of those trying to make sure the legislature felt pain.

If that deficit is noted outside of the time of the few days that the legislature meets, then the Governor has to make the cuts. Virtually everybody in the administration worked for the Governor. So when he made the cuts, they took the priorities and they chopped off the lowest priorities, so it was not noticeable around the State, and it works out well. That is leadership. That is tough leadership because the Governor does not like to have to be the one who is held up for all the scrutiny of what is spent.

That is what the President has to do. That is the President's job, to get this budget back in balance. There are some examples around the world where, when they put the budget on a path to balancing, the economy comes up.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes.

Mr. ENZI. That gives people a little bit of confidence of what can happen. Right now, there is not a lot of confidence around this country, so the economy is dropping. But a good budget, that follows a plan, that gets us in

fiscal stability, would make a huge difference for this country and stimulate business.

Mr. SESSIONS. I could not agree more. I do believe the debt course we are on, which is unsustainable—every expert and the witnesses who come before the Budget Committee on which Senator ENZI and I serve have told us it is unsustainable, and if we get off of it and tighten our belts and do things such as Governor Bentley in Alabama is doing, Governor Christie has had to do, Governor Brown is now facing in California—they let that State go so far out of control, it is going to be difficult to bring it back—but they have to make tough choices. If we do that, I believe we will get some positive impact on the economy from the confidence that restores.

I say to Senator CONRAD, I see Senator LIEBERMAN is here. I would be willing to yield if you are ready to use some time now.

Mr. CONRAD. Could I say to my colleague, we have 17 minutes left on this side. We have four Senators left to speak. The Senator has, I think, probably 54, 53 minutes left—something like that.

So I say to Senator LIEBERMAN, if you could take about 4 minutes, if that would work for you.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I was hoping for 4¼ minutes. OK. I will do my best.

Mr. CONRAD. Sold.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I will yield 4 minutes to the Senator from our side.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Senator.

Mr. SESSIONS. He will have a flat 8 minutes.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. That is very generous of my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota and the Senator from Alabama.

I have been listening to some of the statements that are being made. They are quite sincere. They are quite interesting. But I am afraid, in the end, they are not going to signify very much except good intentions.

We have ourselves in a position here where we all know the country has a terrible problem. We are spending a lot more than we are bringing in. The simplest way to explain it is, the last time I looked—I think I am still close on this—revenues of the Federal Government are about 15 or 16 percent of gross domestic product and the spending of the Federal Government is about 25 percent of gross domestic product. There you have a yawning, enormous deficit, which adds up now to a long-term debt of over $15 trillion.

We cannot go on like this and be a great country. We cannot go on like this and have any hope of economic recovery. I happen to agree—I should say in gratitude for the extra time Senator SESSIONS has given me—I happen to agree with the last thing he said. I think—and I am not alone; I think some people on both sides feel this—the best thing we can do for our economy and economic growth is to adopt a bipartisan long-term program that will reduce and hopefully eliminate our debt. Why? Because it will restore confidence in the American economy.

We all know that jobs do not come from government. They should not come from government or in government. Jobs that people want, need, come from the private sector. The last time I looked, the private sector—American business—was sitting on somewhere between $2 trillion and $3 trillion of liquid assets that they are not spending. Why aren't they spending it? They have very little confidence in the future—not just confidence about how the economy is going to be, but what we are going to do, what the government is going to do.

I think if we adopted a long-term bipartisan debt reduction program that gave them some sense of security about what taxes and spending policies were going to do for some years ahead, they would start to invest that $2 trillion to $3 trillion again, and that would create hundreds of thousands of jobs that people desperately need, who are trying so hard to get back to work.

Look, basically we know what we have to do to make this happen. To state it bluntly, it has to be a combination of tax reform and entitlement reform. We have to raise revenues so they get back up to 18, 19, 20 percent and we have to bring spending down—most of the spending increases are coming from entitlements—to about 18 or 19 percent of GDP so we can be in balance. It is not very mysterious how we are going to do this. But the political will is not there now to make those tough decisions.

Today is a classic moment. We have these budget resolutions that are before us as a matter of privilege. They are privileged matters. I have wanted to vote to proceed to some of them just to get on the subject matter, hoping that maybe the door would be opened for direction to various committees to come back with long-term solutions, as I have talked about.

We all know the Bowles-Simpson model is the one we are going to eventually get to. The question is, how close do we get to the fiscal cliff—or has our country gone over the cliff, falling down—and, finally, we rush in here and in a panic rescue it with something like Simpson-Bowles?

The closest Senate proposal that would do what we need to do is the one my friend from North Dakota has tabled in the Budget Committee. I wish we could vote on it. I do not know how many votes we would get, but I wish we could at least start the process.

I know everybody says we are going to come back after the election and there is going to be a burst of courage, I guess because the election is over, and we are going to do the Simpson-Bowles tax reform and entitlement reform. What I am sort of hearing in the wind around here is, do not count on it. I hope so. Senator CONRAD and I, it is going to be our last couple of months on this particular stage. There is nothing I know he would like more to be part of, and I can tell you nothing I would like more to be part of, than doing a bipartisan, long-term debt reduction program.

But I am fearful that it is asking an awful lot of the system in a short period of time, and the tendency will be to protect us from falling off the cliff by extending everything that is going to expire at the end of the year: stopping the sequestering, stopping the end of the Bush tax cuts. I hope I am wrong. I know there are some bipartisan groups that I have been part of that are working to get ready for that point.

That is important work, because it cannot spring out of nowhere. But our country's future is at stake, the future of the greatest economy in the history of the world, because of our irresponsibility is the only thing I can say, and we have been part of it. I take blame for part of it. We are not doing what the country needs us to do.

I am going to vote against the motions to proceed, because each of them, the proposals before us do not achieve anything near what we need to do in terms of a balance—entitlement reform, tax reform.

I do want to say one other thing which I hope we can get to soon. To say the obvious, but sometimes it is important to say it, the existing budget process has broken down. It does not work. It is not related to the reality of the economic or political times we are in. So the budget process does not work. Let me cite a couple of statistics. Not since early in 2009 has the Congress managed to actually pass a real annual budget resolution. I know the Budget Control Act does some of the things a budget resolution would do, but not all of them, and it does not do what the Budget Reform Act of 1974 called on us to do.

Listen to this. Only four times in the last 35 years—four times in 35 years—have the appropriations bills been completed prior to the beginning of a new fiscal year. What business or what other government entity could operate like that?

The last time Congress successfully passed all of the appropriations bills prior to the beginning of a new fiscal year was 1996. We know it because we have been here. Over and over again, Congress slides from one temporary short-term appropriations bill to the next, months into the fiscal year, until we finally throw it into one big hodgepodge, which is not responsible government, and a lot gets hidden in it.

I want to raise the question—I know my friends on the Budget Committee have thought about it. I sense my time is up. I wonder whether we need a commission to take a look in a short period

of time, 6 months, at the budget process we are following now and make recommendations for a new process that will work. Maybe it is a lack of political will and an inability to take on these tough issues now, but maybe it is the process, and maybe that is something sooner than later we can work together on.

I thank Senators CONRAD and SESSIONS for allowing me to speak as long as I was able to.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would share something that was in last week's Wall Street Journal, because it deals with an issue that is important and not to be dismissed, and that is should we begin to make reductions in spending today. I think Mr. Barro provides some real valuable insight to that.

With regard to Senator LIEBERMAN, I do think that the budget process can work. It should be able to work. But it will not work if we do not try to make it work. Under certain circumstances, it is hard to get a bipartisan budget if you do not have everybody together. So maybe it is worth examining whether we can make improvements there.

But Mr. Barro deals with this question. He writes:

The weak economic recovery in the U.S. and the even weaker performance in much of Europe have renewed calls for ending budget austerity and returning to larger fiscal deficits. Curiously, this plea for more fiscal expansion fails to offer any proof that Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries that chose more budget stimulus have performed better than those that opted for more austerity.

He continues. These are the developed countries in the world, OECD countries.

He goes on:

Two interesting European cases are Germany and Sweden, each of which moved toward rough budget balance between 2009 and 2011—

That is after the financial crisis—

while sustaining comparatively strong growth—the average growth rate per year for real GDP for 2010 and 2011 was 3.6% growth for Germany and 4.9% for Sweden. If austerity is so terrible, how come these two countries have done so well?

The OECD countries most clearly in or near renewed recession—Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and perhaps Ireland and the Netherlands—are among those with relatively large fiscal deficits.

The deficits for these six countries for 2010 and 2011 were 7.9 percent of GDP. Germany and Sweden did not raise taxes but cut spending. He goes on to say:

Every time heightened fiscal deficits fail to produce desirable outcomes, the policy advice is to choose still larger deficits—

Borrow, tax, and spend. He goes on to say:

If, as I believe to be true, fiscal deficits have only a short-run expansionary impact on growth and then become negative, the results from following this policy are persistently low economic growth and an exploding ratio of debt to GDP.

Japan, he goes on to note, ''once a comparatively low public-debt nation, apparently bought into the Keynesian message many years ago.'' That is the ''spend'' message. ''The consequences for today is a ratio of government debt to GDP around 210 percent, the largest in the world.''

I ask unanimous consent to have that article printed in the RECORD because I think it helps give us some guidance that at some point bringing spending under control and tightening our deficit clearly would achieve more financial benefit than continuing to borrow and spend or create new taxes that depress the economy.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, May 9, 2012]

STIMULUS SPENDING KEEPS FAILING—IF AUSTERITY IS SO TERRIBLE, HOW COME GERMANY AND SWEDEN HAVE DONE SO WELL?

(By Robert J. Barro)

The weak economic recovery in the U.S. and the even weaker performance in much of Europe have renewed calls for ending budget austerity and returning to larger fiscal deficits. Curiously, this plea for more fiscal expansion fails to offer any proof that Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries that chose more budget stimulus have performed better than those that opted for more austerity. Similarly, in the American context, no evidence is offered that past U.S. budget deficits (averaging 9% of GDP between 2009 and 2011) helped to promote the economic recovery.

Two interesting European cases are Germany and Sweden, each of which moved toward rough budget balance between 2009 and 2011 while sustaining comparatively strong growth—the average growth rate per year of real GDP for 2010 and 2011 was 3.6% for Germany and 4.9% for Sweden. If austerity is so terrible, how come these two countries have done so well?

The OECD countries most clearly in or near renewed recession—Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and perhaps Ireland and the Netherlands—are among those with relatively large fiscal deficits. The median of fiscal deficits for these six countries for 2010 and 2011 was 7.9% of GDP. Of course, part of this pattern reflects a positive effect of weak economic growth on deficits, rather than the reverse. But there is nothing in the overall OECD data since 2009 that supports the Keynesian view that fiscal expansion has promoted economic growth.

For the U.S., my view is that the large fiscal deficits had a moderately positive effect on GDP growth in 2009, but this effect faded quickly and most likely became negative for 2011 and 2012. Yet many Keynesian economists look at the weak U.S. recovery and conclude that the problem was that the government lacked sufficient commitment to fiscal expansion; it should have been even larger and pursued over an extended period.

This new point is dangerously unstable. Every time heightened fiscal deficits fail to produce desirable outcomes, the policy advice is to choose still larger deficits. If, as I believe to be true, fiscal deficits have only a short-run expansionary impact on growth and then become negative, the results from following this policy advice are persistently low economic growth and an exploding ratio of public debt to GDP.

The last conclusion is not just academic, because it fits with the behavior of Japan over the past two decades. Once a comparatively low public-debt nation, Japan apparently bought the Keynesian message many years ago. The consequence for today is a ratio of government debt to GDP around 210%—the largest in the world.

This vast fiscal expansion didn't avoid two decades of sluggish GDP growth, which averaged less than 1% per year from 1991 to 2011. No doubt, a committed Keynesian would say that Japanese growth would have been even lower without the extraordinary fiscal stimulus—but a little evidence would be nice.

Despite the lack of evidence, it is remarkable how much allegiance the Keynesian approach receives from policy makers and economists. I think it's because the Keynesian model addresses important macroeconomic policy issues and is pedagogically beautiful, no doubt reflecting the genius of Keynes. The basic model—government steps in to spend when others won't—can be presented readily to one's mother, who is then likely to buy the conclusions.

Keynes worshipers' faith in this model has actually been strengthened by the Great Recession and the associated financial crisis. Yet the empirical support for all this is astonishingly thin. The Keynesian model asks one to turn economic common sense on its head in many ways. For instance, more saving is bad because of the resultant drop in consumer demand, and higher productivity is bad because the increased supply of goods tends to lower the price level, thereby raising the real value of debt. Meanwhile, transfer payments that subsidize unemployment are supposed to lower unemployment, and more government spending is good even if it goes to wasteful projects.

Looking forward, there is a lot to say on economic grounds for strengthening fiscal austerity in OECD countries. From a political perspective, however, the movement toward austerity may be difficult to sustain in some countries, notably in France and Greece where leftists and other anti-austerity groups just won elections.

Consequently, there is likely to be increasing diversity across countries in fiscal policies, and this divergence will likely make it increasingly hard to sustain the euro as a common currency. On the plus side, the differing policies will provide better data to analyze the economic consequences of austerity.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would share a few thoughts in general about where we are. Our colleagues on the Democratic side have said they want more taxes. They have not told us what taxes, how much, and where they would be. But they have told us that. Senator CONRAD has said that.

He has also been open and bold about the need to cut spending. So he wants more tax increases than I would like and he wants substantial spending cuts, but that is his view. He stated it publicly. But I will have to say, that is not the position of the Democratic majority in the Senate because they have refused to put it on paper.

Senator CONRAD was going to have a Budget Committee mark up. We were going to mark up a budget. He was going to lay out a plan. I guess it would be somewhat ''Simpson-Bowlesish.'' But it was not offered because the leadership and I suppose the members of the Democratic Conference agreed that they do not want to be on record. They would rather do like last year. And what happened last year?

They voted against the Toomey budget; they voted against the Ryan budget; they voted against the Rand Paul budget; and voted against the President's budget.

They wiped their hands. They did not vote for anything to cause any pain to anybody. And presumably they thought that was better than actually being engaged in leading and telling the American people what they planned to do to change the debt course we are on. That is the deal.

Well, I would say a couple of things. If I were talking to a group of American citizens today, I would say this: Do not send one more dime to Washington, DC until they show you a budget, how they are going to spend it. I mean, why should they? We get in trouble; we overspend; we place the Nation at risk. And all we want to say is: Send more money. You cannot cut, we are going to throw people into the streets, and push older people off the cliff in a wheelchair.

No, I do not think so. I think the American people need to hold this Congress, this government, to account. They need to say, we are not sending you any more money until you get your house in order. And we are not paying for hot tubs in Las Vegas. We are not throwing away $500 million on a Solyndra loan project that never had a chance to succeed and was benefiting cronies of the White House. We are not going to pay for the TSA to have warehouses filled with millions of dollars in equipment not being used.

You do not have your act together. We want you to get your act together. We want to see some management. We want to see some leadership. Who is the top manager in America? It is not the chairman of the Budget Committee, or the ranking member of the Budget Committee, it is the Chief Executive. The President heads the executive branch. Every Cabinet member, subcabinet member, sub-sub-sub cabinet member works for the President.

We had a situation where it has become clear that for over a year, people illegally in the country earning money are filing income tax returns and gaining as much as $4 billion a year in child tax credit money, a direct payment from the United States for children who do not even live in the country.

The Inspector General for the U.S. Treasury Department said this should have been ended, and the IRS is not ending it. Congress ought to pass a law about it. The House has done so. This Senate has not acted. Those are the kinds of things that are happening. I would think the President of the United States, as soon as he learned that, would say: Stop it today. If you care about the money of the American people, if you care about the fact that we are now spending about $3.6 trillion dollars a year, taking in $2.3 trillion a year, so a deficit of $1.3 trillion.

Oh, they say that President Bush increased the deficit. And he did. But the highest deficit he ever had was about $450-some-odd billion. The last 3 years under President Obama, the deficits have averaged over $1.3 trillion a year. Next year, beginning September 30, the next fiscal year, it is projected to be over $1 trillion again.

This is an unsustainable course. We are looking here for some reality and leadership. I think it is a stunning, amazing development when we have the President of the United States at a time of financial systemic crisis and danger who has the opportunity to lead, who does not lead, who has an opportunity to tell the American people why we need to change the course we are on, the fact that it is going to take some belt tightening and some pain and some sacrifice—not so much, but some.

We are going to have to do it. And if we do it, the country will be on a good path. We can save this country. We can avoid a debt crisis that could happen to us, because indeed our debt per person in America is higher than that of Greece, higher than that of any other country in Europe. We are in a dangerous area. We need to get off of it. I am amazed the President has not led.

I think it is a development of the most stunning nature that he would, as the law requires, submit the budget he submitted. It is irresponsible. It did not get a single vote in the Senate last year. It went down 97 to 0. It was voted down 414 to 0 in the House this year. I suspect in an hour or so it will go down again on the floor of the Senate by unanimous vote. That speaks a lot. That says a lot, indicates the sad state of affairs which we are in.

It is deeply disappointing.

I see Senator LEE from Utah here, who is a new Member of the Senate. If Senator CONRAD doesn't have an objection, I will yield to him and note that Senator LEE campaigned throughout his State. He talked to thousands of people. He was elected in this last cycle. He felt the mood of the people of his State and America, their concern about the debt course we are on. He has worked extremely hard and has laid out a proposal that he would like to explain and ask us to support.

I thank the Senator for his leadership and his commitment and his hard work since he has been in the Senate.

Mr. CONRAD. Might I inquire of Senator LEE, how much time would the Senator require?

Mr. LEE. Ten or twelve minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. Can we have an agreement for 15 minutes? Is that reasonable?

Mr. LEE. Yes.

Mr. CONRAD. And if the Senator completes his statement before then, he can yield back—either way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, the true greatness of our Nation lies in the power and promise of the American dream. Unfortunately, for many individuals and families, this dream has become a national nightmare. Without the clear priorities and accountability of a budget, we continue to careen toward the economic cliff, with our massive debt and trillion-dollar deficits threatening the prosperity of Americans from every walk of life. To put it simply, we must change course.

Restoring the American dream will require more than clever bumper sticker slogans. While optimism is an important part of the American dream, hope simply is not a strategy for the kind of course correction our country desperately needs.

Doing nothing is no longer an option, although this President and this Congress have attempted, by not having a budget, to convince the American people that doing nothing is somehow the only option. Ignoring our broken entitlement programs, maintaining our complex Tax Code, and pretending we don't have a spending problem ensures that our economy will never truly recover and that the American dream will not be restored.

The good news for Americans is that many of us do have solutions to confront and correct the country's most pressing challenges. In today's debate and discussion, the Nation has seen that changing course and balancing our budget doesn't have to take 30 years, nor does it have to require the kinds of drastic cuts that could devastate America's most vulnerable citizens.

As we conclude this debate, I remind my colleagues of the old adage that ''you can make excuses or you can make progress, but you cannot make both.'' Given the gravity of our current situation, we should also recognize that our present path is unsustainable. A course correction is coming; the question we will be held accountable for answering is whether that correction comes by choice or as a consequence of making excuses and doing nothing.

The Saving the American Dream Plan, which I have proposed, puts us on a sustainable and affordable path toward economic growth. It reforms our Tax Code to make paying taxes a simple, transparent, and equitable process that regular people can perform on their own. It empowers families to save by making savings tax free, which in turn lowers their tax burden in a way that helps them and our economy. It establishes a single tax rate. It eliminates the payroll tax, helping all Americans—especially those at the lowest income level—and it abolishes the death tax permanently. Under this plan, Americans will no longer be forced to navigate the complex web of countless loopholes—for people who don't need them—contained within a tax code that is longer than the works of Shakespeare.

In addition to placing an enormous burden and imposing immense uncertainty on our people, such a tax system hides the true size and cost of government. This plan is simple, and it provides certainty for individuals and for businesses.

Opponents of reform will play petty politics and prey on false fears about the government's ability to help the helpless. They claim that any course correction in entitlement or social service spending will damage the social safety net. The truth is that doing nothing will absolutely and completely destroy the safety net. If we do not change course, the collapse of safety net services for our most vulnerable Americans is certain, and it is certain to hurt most those who have the least.

This plan saves Social Security by transitioning to a real insurance plan that provides income security for seniors and prevents sudden poverty as a result of unforeseen events. The affluent elderly, such as Warren Buffett, will see a decrease in benefits. This plan will allow people like Mr. Buffett to help in a way that is actually good for our economy and job creators.

The Saving the American Dream Plan also ends the government takeover of health care and puts dollars and decisions back into the hands of families and individuals and their doctors. Just like school choice allows parents to make sure their kids don't get stuck in a failing school system, this plan ensures families don't get stuck in a failing health care system.

Finally, this plan acknowledges that we have a spending problem and works to reduce the size of government, eliminate waste, lower the future burden on taxpayers, encourage productive economic activity, and enhance individual liberty and choice. It reins in spending by a total of $9.6 trillion over 10 years when compared to President Obama's budget and by $7.1 trillion as against the CBO baseline.

Supporters of the status quo will have every excuse as to why this budget or that budget won't work, but now is the time to stop making excuses and start making progress. Today we will vote on five budget proposals, but this is only the beginning of the discussion. I can say confidently that Republicans have done a tremendous amount of work to craft proposals to begin to change our course and move our country in the right direction, in a sustainable direction.

The President's budget reflects the status quo: Do nothing, keep our complex Tax Code and broken entitlement programs, and ignore spending. As for Senate Democrats, for 3 straight years they have refused to participate in this discussion except to criticize ideas they don't like. Leadership is what leadership does. For the past 1,113 days, our country has suffered from a lack of leadership.

I ask my colleagues, if you cannot vote for these budget plans today, will you at least do the right thing for the country and put aside election-year politics, show true leadership, and work with us to explore and implement real solutions? We cannot stand by the status quo. We cannot decide by default to do nothing. The American people expect more, and they deserve better.

We need every American to join us in finding the solutions that will enable us as a nation to change course. The Saving the American Dream Plan is about empowering individuals to define their own dream and ensuring they have every opportunity to make that dream reality.

This is the greatest civilization the world has ever known—not because government made it great but because Americans continually reject the status quo, choose to change course when needed, and demand economic freedom, while ensuring individual liberty and the right to pursue happiness.

This budget preserves the clear priorities and accountability we must have to jump-start the economy, create real jobs, strengthen the safety net, and restore the American dream.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I would like to echo what so many of my colleagues have already explained: that voting on a budget today would serve no purpose. We keep hearing from our friends on the other side of the aisle: ''We haven't passed a budget in a thousand days.'' While this is technically true, this is a technicality without a difference, and ignores one essential detail: we passed something else which, for all intents and purposes, accomplishes exactly the same thing as a budget the Budget Control Act of 2011.

First let's look at what a budget resolution actually is. According to the Congressional Research Service, a budget resolution:

> sets forth aggregate levels of spending, revenue, and public debt. It is not intended to establish details of spending or revenue policy and does not provide levels of spending for specific agencies or programs. Instead, its purpose is to create enforceable parameters within which Congress can consider legislation dealing with spending and revenue.

A budget resolution is a document intended to guide Congress, and never goes to the President for his signature. The Budget Control Act actually went much further than a budget resolution—it actually set spending caps for the next 10 years and put them into law—a law signed by the President. The spending caps alone produce $900 billion of cuts. In addition, the Budget Control Act created the Super Committee and, because the committee failed to produce a deficit reduction plan, the Act calls for automatic cuts—through a so-called ''sequestration''—of an additional $1.2 trillion.

So Congress has passed over $2 trillion in spending cuts—the biggest package of spending cuts in American history. Yet some of my colleagues are now calling on Congress to also pass a budget resolution, despite the fact that the Budget Control Act has the force of law, and has spending caps, whereas a budget resolution has none of that and in fact, the Budget Control Act states clearly that it ''shall apply in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget.

In addition, the Budget Control Act is something that we all agreed to. This legislation passed the Senate and the Republican-controlled House with wide margins. And this was not a deal that we passed years ago that we have somehow forgotten about—we passed the Budget Control Act less than 10 months ago. These budget resolutions diverge greatly from the deal that we all agreed on. We passed that legislation to avoid a debt default, to give us some certainty. But here we are 10 months later, rehashing much of the same debate.

Going through the motions of considering a budget resolution would not be a productive use of our time. Procedural rules require that we spend up to 50 hours on a budget resolution. And on top of that, they force us into a ''vote-a-rama'' on all amendments that are offered. So that means that we would lose a week or 2 on an exercise that is moot because we already have budget caps. That is time we would not have to focus on things that will provide needed help to my Minnesota constituents: creating jobs, helping small businesses, keeping interest rates low on student loans, and passing a long-term highway bill.

But instead, the minority is insisting that we spend precious time debating whether or not we should pass a budget resolution. And so here we are with five pending budget resolutions, and it is hard to tell which among them is the most detrimental to our country, because they are all very dangerous.

Senator PAUL's proposal eliminates the U.S. Departments of Education, Energy, Commerce, and Housing and Urban Development and turns important safety net programs like child nutrition and Medicaid into block grants, resulting in their funding being slashed.

Most of the proposals fundamentally change Medicare from a program that guarantees health care to seniors to one that gives seniors some money—but not enough money—to buy health insurance in the private market. This breaks the promise we have made to Americans—that if they work hard and pay into the system, their health care will be covered when they retire.

Yet these massive cuts to programs which benefit millions of Americans seem designed to bankroll new tax cuts that benefit only the wealthiest few. The Urban Institute and Brookings Institution's joint Tax Policy Center estimates that Senator TOOMEY's proposal gives people making more than a million dollars a year an average tax cut of $92,000. And that plan looks reasonable compared to Senator PAUL's, which not only cuts the top tax rates in half for wealthy Americans but increases taxes on working families.

And all the while, these plans would sacrifice programs that assist children, seniors, and the poor in favor of those tax giveaways to the wealthy. That is how these plans can be summarized. If there were a reason to vote on these proposals, which I do not think there is, then they would all deserve our full-throated opposition.

But, as we have pointed out repeatedly, passing a budget resolution is simply not needed after we have already passed spending caps in the Budget Control Act. That would be about as productive as asking for someone to draft up blueprints after they already had built your house.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, our Nation faces enormous and worrisome fiscal challenges. There is no question we must reduce our budget deficit in the medium-term and prepare for a longer-term future in which an aging population stresses Medicare and Social Security funds. And we face, at the beginning of January, the prospect of automatic, unprioritized, and unwise budget cuts that would do tremendous harm to just about every program in the government, from domestic programs to our military, and would in the process threaten our economic recovery.

The way to address those enormous challenges is by coming together to address the sources of our budget deficit. The solutions must include prudent, prioritized spending cuts. They will undoubtedly include reforms to entitlement programs to ensure their long-term viability. And, as just about any objective observer has repeatedly pointed out, the solutions must include restoration of revenues lost to the Treasury through unjustified tax cuts for the wealthiest and unjustified tax loopholes.

Democrats have repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to address these areas—even in painful ways that have a real impact on programs about which we feel strongly. President Obama has repeatedly reached out to Republicans in trying to craft a bipartisan agreement that deals with spending, entitlements and revenues. Senator CONRAD and many others on this side of the aisle have said they will work with our Republican colleagues to deal comprehensively with the deficit.

Rather than seeking compromise, Republicans seem determined to draw uncompromising lines in the sand. Today we will vote on extreme budget proposals that would sacrifice vital programs like education, transportation and research in order to protect tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires.

The Republican proposals before us today demonstrate that our efforts to deal constructively with the deficit have so far fallen on deaf ears. Rather than offer prudent, thoughtful spending cuts, these proposals would gut programs that Americans have repeatedly told us to preserve. Rather than recognize the obvious fiscal reality that revenue must be part of the equation, these proposals demonstrate a continued, ideologically motivated refusal to even consider what must obviously be part of any serious attempt to address the deficit. Rather than reform entitlement programs so we can maintain our commitment to seniors, these proposals would upend that commitment.

Perhaps the clearest statement of all of Republican intentions is the budget passed in the House, one of the proposals we will vote on today. This budget eliminates the decades-long guarantee of health care for our seniors, replacing Medicare with a voucher program that would cause skyrocketing out-of-pocket costs for seniors.

There is more. The Ryan budget proposes to cut billions and billions from domestic programs, but gives us no specifics as to how those cuts would be accomplished. It proposes almost no specific spending cuts, though it promises massive savings. We can see just how devastating these cuts would be if we assume, in the absence of specific proposals, that they would be distributed evenly across the budget. If that were the case, we would lose more than $100 billion in funding over the next decade for science, including the search for new cures and other new technologies. We would have space for 2 million fewer Head Start students to get a jump on their education. More than 9 million college students would lose $1,000 in Pell grant funding to afford college.

This budget would slash spending to educate our children and to train our workers. It would cut funding to support new sources of energy and to protect our national parks and historic sites, and for environmental protection and other natural resource programs. It would slash funding to pave our roads and bridges and meet other transportation needs.

And the Ryan plan does not address what budget experts of all ideological stripes tell us we must address: the need for additional revenues. Rather than restore revenue, this budget is premised on the notion that high-income earners haven't gotten enough in tax cuts—and so it slashes the top tax bracket.

If you are not willing to address revenues, you are not serious about addressing the deficit. The Ryan budget and the other Republican proposals before us fail that test. I hope we can dispense with these proposals and get to the challenging work of dealing with the deficit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, Senator HARKIN is here, and Senator HARKIN needs about 4 minutes; is that right?

Mr. HARKIN. Yes.

Mr. CONRAD. How much time do we have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thirteen minutes 20 seconds.

Mr. CONRAD. On the other side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twenty-four minutes 46 seconds.

Mr. CONRAD. This might be a useful time to get another consent. If we can have Senator HARKIN for 4 minutes, how much time does Senator JOHNSON need?

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. Not more than 10 minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. OK. I ask unanimous consent that Senator HARKIN speak for 4 minutes and Senator JOHNSON for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to address these budget proposals in one context. First of all, we have to dismiss the so-called Sessions budget that is supposedly the Obama budget—it is not. That is not even serious. Beyond that, we have four Republican budgets. Here is the one thing people have to keep in mind, especially now: Each one of those budgets will double the interest rate on student loans beginning on July 1 of this year—every single one of them.

We were here in the last couple of weeks trying to bring up a bill to prevent those interest rates from going up, to keep it at 3.4 percent rather than going to 6.8 percent. The Republicans filibustered that. We could not even bring it up for discussion, debate, and amending. But the Republicans kept saying, oh, they want to keep the interest rate at 3.4 percent. Well, quite frankly, I don't see how they can say that and then vote for each one of these budgets because each one that will be voted on in about an hour and a half, if it passes, will double the interest rate on student loans on July 1. At the same time, they continue to filibuster our bill to even bring it on the floor. My friends on the other side of the aisle are telling students across the country they don't want to see the interest rate double, but their budget has it.

Our former colleague and now the Vice President of the United States JOE BIDEN, when he was a Senator, said something I think very savvy one time: Don't tell me what you value; show me your budget, and I will tell you what you value.

Mr. President, my friends on the other side may say in public that they want to prevent the student loan rate hike, but their actual budget tells a very different story. Likewise, their ongoing filibuster of our Stop the Student Loan Interest Rate Hike Act tells a different story. Again, they have blocked us from proceeding to the bill. If we had proceeded, we could have had a serious discussion about how we pay for it. They could have offered amendments that we could have voted on. Instead, they chose to obstruct the entire process, and yet repeatedly on this floor Republicans, one after the other, came up and said they want to stop the increase in interest rates from going from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent. Don't tell me what you value; show me your budget. I will give them credit for this: They have shown us their budget, and in it is a doubling of the interest rate on student loans beginning July 1.

I want to be clear that anybody who votes for any one of these budgets is voting to double the student loan interest rate on July 1 regardless of what may be said, regardless of crocodile

tears that may be shed on interest rates and what is happening. The budgets we are voting on today tell the true story: Republicans are willing—not only willing, but they are going to, if they vote for these budgets, double the interest rates on student loans beginning on July 1. There is just no getting around that, and that is a shame.

We have to stop that interest rate hike on July 1. That is why it is important to vote down these proposed budgets this afternoon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. I ask unanimous consent to speak for no more than 10 minutes.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. Mr. President, before I start talking a bit about the budget of my friend Senator LEE, I want to respond to the comments of the Senator from Iowa in terms of interest rates.

Instead of talking about student rates, let me talk a little about America's average borrowing cost. Certainly, what I have done is delved into the budget and taken a look at the history, and from 1970 to 1999—over that 30-year period—the average borrowing cost in the United States was 5.3 percent. By the way, that was when America was a far more creditworthy nation, when our debt-to-GDP ratio ranged from about 40 percent to 67 percent. Now our debt-to-GDP ratio is over 100 percent.

Over the last 3 years our average borrowing cost has been kept artificially low, at 1.5 percent. So my concern is by not seriously addressing the problem, by not actually passing a real budget that starts reining in the growth in government, we are going to go from that 1.5 percent and revert back to that average mean borrowing cost of 5.3 percent. If we do, that 3.8-percent differential would add $600 billion to $700 billion per year to America's interest expense, and that would crowd out 60 to 70 percent of all discretionary spending. That is the interest rate that I am concerned about.

That is the day of reckoning I am concerned about, when global investors look at the United States and say: You know what. We are not going to loan you any more money. Or what is more likely to occur, they will say: We will loan you money but at a far higher rate.

Having made that statement, I would like to talk a little about the budget of my friend, Senator LEE, and the things I like about it. One of the things I like to do is take a look at history. I know a lot of us say we don't have a tax problem, and we don't. It is not that we tax the American public too little, it is that we spend too much. And this is some pretty graphic proof.

This reflects our 10-year spending levels. From 1992 to 2000, the Federal Government spent a total of $16 trillion over that 10-year period. Over the last 10 years, from 2002 to 2011, the Federal Government spent $28 trillion.

Now, the debate moving forward is—according to the just released Obama budget—the President would like to spend $47 trillion over the next 10 years. The House budget would spend $40 trillion. I guess what I like about Senator LEE's budget is that he would come in and spend about $37 trillion and put us on a more aggressive path toward fiscal sanity. While we hear about Draconian cuts all the time, one doesn't have to be a math major to realize that moving to $37 trillion, $40 trillion, or $47 trillion is not a cut from $28 trillion. All we are trying to do is reduce the rate of growth.

The other thing I like about Senator LEE's budget can be illustrated in terms of this chart, which shows the total Federal debt. I started this chart in 1987, the tail end of Ronald Reagan's administration, when our total Federal debt was $2.3 trillion. I want to point out that it took us 200 years to incur $2.3 trillion. Of course, last year, in the debt ceiling agreement, this Congress gave the President the authority to increase our debt ceiling by $2.1 trillion. We will go through that in less than 2 years. That is a problem.

Of course, if we take a look at President Obama's budget, we can see how quickly our national debt has increased. But according to President Obama's budget, in the year 2022 our total Federal debt would be $25.9 trillion, up $10 trillion from what it is today. Senator LEE's budget would result in a total debt of about $19.1 trillion. Even more importantly, he stabilizes and then reduces a very important metric, our overall debt-to-GDP ratio. That is what investors take a look at in terms of our creditworthiness.

The other thing I like about Senator LEE's budget is by 2022 it will reduce Federal spending to 17.8 percent of the size of our economy. If you are like me and you think the root cause of our economic problem is the size, the scope, and all the rules and regulations, all of government's intrusion into our lives and the resulting cost of government, this is the key metric: How large is the Federal Government in relationship to the size of our economy?

Currently, the Federal Government takes 24 cents of every dollar that is generated by our economy. If we add in State and local governments, total government in the United States consumes 39.2 percent. Put another way, 39 cents of every dollar filters through some level of government.

I don't know about anyone else, but I don't find government particularly effective or efficient. To put that in perspective, for example, the cost of government for Norway last year—one of the European-style socialist nations—was 40 percent. For Greece, it was 47 percent. Anybody hear of Greece recently? That economic model is collapsing.

This is why Senator LEE's proposal is important. If we take a look at spending and revenue generation over the last 50 years, we can see spending from 1959 through 2008 averaged 20.2 percent. Over the last 3 years we have increased that to 24 percent. Revenue generation has been 18.1 percent over that same time period.

By the way, as much as our friends on the other side of the aisle want to punish success and increase the top marginal tax rates, the problem with that is it simply doesn't work. During my lifeline, the top marginal tax rates have been 90 percent, 70 percent to 50 percent to 28 percent, 35 percent, 39.6 percent, and now back to 35 percent. In all that time period the average tax receipts—the maximum amount the Federal Government could extract from our economy—has averaged very tightly around that mean of 18.1 percent.

If we ever have any chance of living within our means, we better get Federal spending down to about that level. That is what Senator LEE's budget does.

So, again, I thank my friend Senator LEE, as well as Senator TOOMEY, and Senator PAUL for putting forward serious proposals. I thank all Republicans in Congress who are actually voting for something because, Mr. President, Republicans are proving we are willing to be held accountable to the American people by putting a plan on the table and showing the American people what we would do to try to get our fiscal house in order.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will not take more than a few minutes, as I have explained to the senior Senator from North Dakota. I appreciate his courtesy, and I ask unanimous consent that my statement be made as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Withought objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. LEAHY are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, before he leaves, I want to say that the Senator from Vermont has done an incredible job on the Violence Against Women Act. He has put together a bipartisan coalition, and I would like to second his words that the House pass our bill. It is a careful compromise, and it is a delicately crafted compromise.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator suspend? How much time does the Senator from North Dakota yield to the Senator from New York?

Mr. CONRAD. How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. CONRAD. I give the Senator 3 minutes.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my colleague for the time.

Again, I want to compliment the Senator from Vermont and agree with him and hope we can move the bill forward.

But, Mr. President, I am here to talk about the budget. All afternoon I have heard my colleagues on the other side of the aisle repeat over and over that we haven't passed a budget. As my friend from North Dakota knows, that is clearly not the case.

Last August, President Obama signed a budget for this year that reduces the deficit by $2 trillion. It is called the Budget Control Act. It was passed 74 to 26, bipartisan, with many Republicans voting for it on August 2, 2011.

Despite what we hear on the floor today, after the Budget Control Act passed, several Senate Republicans, including Senators GRASSLEY, ALEXANDER, and COLLINS, admitted it constitutes a budget. So watching this debate on the Senate floor is a sort of through-the-looking-glass experience. We are watching our colleagues call for something they acknowledge already happened and they supported. This is nothing more than petty politics. We should be focused on jobs and the economy. Instead we are forced to spend hours debating something that already happened. It doesn't make sense.

But let's put that aside for a moment and look at the extreme plans we are voting on today. The only real differences between the four Republican budgets—the only real difference between the four Republican budgets—is how quickly they race to end Medicare as we know it. The Republican budgets all cut taxes on the wealthiest Americans and leave the middle class to foot the bill. They all allow student loan rates to double. They all provide tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires. And they all put the middle class last instead of first.

When I first examined the Ryan budget passed by the House GOP this year, I thought it was the height of irresponsibility. But now that we have seen three other Republican budgets, we know they make the Ryan budget almost seem reasonable by comparison, and that is no small feat.

I have nothing against the wealthy. I am glad they make money. That is the America way. God bless them. Many are living the American dream. But in order to keep that dream alive and get our country on firmer fiscal footing, I think we need a little shared sacrifice. The bottom line is any budget that jeopardizes the middle class while filling the pockets of the wealthy with greater tax breaks is ultimately untenable and will never pass the Senate. While we are certainly open to compromise, Democrats will not tolerate an assault on the middle class. It isn't fair and it isn't right.

We hope the coming debate will yield a sound serious agreement. But if it doesn't, Democrats are happy to take this contrast of priorities into November because we know we have the high ground.

I thank the Chair, and I yield my remaining time back to my friend and colleague from North Dakota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, the Budget Control Act is not a budget, it is just a containment of spending. A clever attempt was made to make it look like a budget, but it is not a budget. If it was a budget, why did the President submit a budget this year? Why did the House pass a budget? Why were four budgets produced in the House by Democratic House Members?

In today's Politico, an article quotes Senator LIEBERMAN, who just spoke and who caucuses with the Democrats.

I don't think [Democrats] will offer their own budget and I'm disappointed in that.

Senator MANCHIN of West Virginia, a Democrat, said he would have been ''impeached'' if he had failed to produce a budget as West Virginia's Governor, though he conceded there are differences with the State budget process.

Sure I have a problem with [failing to offer a budget]. As a former governor, my responsibility was to put a budget forward and balance it, so anyone who comes from the executive mindset has a problem with that. I don't care if you're Democrat or Republican.

''A problem with that'' means a problem with not having a budget.

Senator MARK PRYOR, a Democrat from Arkansas:

The budget process is just not working around here. We've had three years with President Obama where we're not able to get a budget resolution passed.

That 3 years includes this one.

So we don't have a budget, we have a spending cap. And our Democratic colleagues—bless their hearts—have been whining that the House proposed a budget that came below the Senate's Budget Control Act caps in some areas, so they say that was breaking the budget.

I would just advise them that when they vote on the President's budget—and I assume they will all vote against it; they did last year—the President's budget wipes out half the savings in the Budget Control Act.

The President signed the Budget Control Act last August to raise the debt ceiling. We agreed to cut spending $2.1 trillion—not nearly enough, but we cut that and it was a decent step forward in the right direction, and the President proposes a budget this year that takes half of it out. Give me a break. There is no sense of wanting to have a budget, to adhere to one, and to contain spending. What do they want? More taxes.

The President said, ''The Buffett rule will help stabilize the debt.'' That is what the President said; that is, tax increases on the rich would help stabilize the debt. Well, the Buffett tax would raise about $4 billion a year. This year the deficit will be $1,200 billion, not $4 billion. That is not going to fix it. It will be $1,200 billion, and the Buffett rule would raise about $4 billion a year. What kind of responsible leadership is that, for the President of the United States to be traveling this country at a time when we have never faced a more significant financial threat to America—we never, ever have been on a debt course as dangerous as the one we are on today. It is systemic. It is deep. We have to make serious changes, and he goes around saying the Buffett rule is going to stabilize the debt? He also said his budget last year would lead us to balance when the lowest single deficit year in 10 would be a deficit of $748 billion.

So I don't know what kind of leadership we are getting. It is not good leadership. It is worse than no leadership because when a budget is prepared with great effort by Congressman PAUL RYAN in the House, and his budget will actually change the debt course of America and minimize the pain we all have to suffer and create some growth and prosperity, the President invites him over to a conference, sits him down there, and then attacks it, and he has been attacking the budget ever since. Why is this? Why will not our colleagues support any budget?

I fully expect my Democratic colleagues to vote against all of these budgets and not vote for one. Think about that. They will vote against four, not vote for one. Well, because you don't have the fingerprints on anything that results in cutting spending, nobody that benefits from spending is going to be mad with you. Everybody who wants more money and doesn't want to have a dime reduced in the take they get from the taxpayers' trough and the debt we borrow—they don't have any reduction in that, and then they can't be mad at me. But that is not a responsible course.

This is not a little matter. This is what Admiral Mullen, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said just 2 years ago:

The biggest threat we have to our national security is our debt.

In an important statement by 10 former Chairs of the Council of Economic Advisers, who served in Republican and Democratic administrations, they wrote in March of 2011:

At some point, bond markets are likely to turn on the United States, leading to a crisis that could dwarf 2008.

Bond markets will turn. That is what they have done on Greece.

The Simpson-Bowles Commission's Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson, in testimony to our committee, said:

This nation has never faced a more predictable financial crisis.

The same thing as the Council of Economic Advisors said: You are on a debt path that is unsustainable.

Chairman Bernanke, Chairman of the Federal Reserve—always cautious about what he says—talking about the Congressional Budget Office's projections of surging debt year after year, says:

The CBO projections, by design, ignore the adverse effects that such high debt and deficits would likely have on our economy. But if government debt and deficits were actually to grow at the pace envisioned by this scenario, the economic and financial effects would be severe.

And I recall at one point he said in his testimony: You see these debts being projected out there year after year, surging at this high level? You are never going to get there.

What he meant was that we would have a financial crisis before that happened.

I would say to my colleagues, this is a time of challenge for the Senate and the Congress of the United States. Will we rise to the challenge and actually do something? We can talk about it. We can have secret meetings and secret meetings and secret meetings. That is not fixing it. We can have these last-minute decisions, like last summer when the government was about to virtually shut down because the debt limit had been reached, and reach some secret agreement that is brought up on the floor for a vote and is not very well written. Or we can do what the law requires. In the United States Code, the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. It requires that we pass a budget. We can't guarantee exactly how it will all come out, but we ought to attempt to comply with the law, at least. We haven't attempted to do that.

I am worried about our future. I am worried about where we are heading. And I do think the American people have a right to be upset with us. They are not happy with us. They should not be happy with us. When their Congress has allowed this country to reach a state where we are taking in $2.3 trillion and spending $3.6 trillion, when 35, 40 percent of what we spend is borrowed money, the American people have a right to be unhappy about that. They absolutely do. We are not protecting their interests, their children's interests, their future, or the economy.

And it is stunning to me that the leader of the free world, the President of the United States, the Chief Executive, isn't pounding away at the Congress to bring spending under control and to reduce the debt we have. Instead, he seems to never want to talk about it. He only talks about investments—more investments.

In fact, that budget he produced this year, what did it do to the spending levels we agreed to last August? Before the budget control agreement of last August, the U.S. Government was on path to spend $47 trillion over 10 years. What it effectively did was it reduced that spending to $45 trillion—still substantially more each year than we are spending now. There is growth every year under that proposal—too much growth, too much debt. But it was a step. So this year when he proposed his budget, he proposed spending another $1.4 or $1.5 trillion, new, on top of that. After he signed the agreement that we would cap spending at $45 trillion, this would take spending up to $46.6 trillion again, almost $47 trillion, where we were before the agreement was reached. Now, that is not responsible leadership. And he had a big tax increase. Tax and spend—that is what that budget is. And the American people shouldn't be happy with us.

It was noted also that Senator HARKIN said, well, this isn't the President's budget, that Senator SESSIONS offered some joke, or something to that matter. But it is the President's budget. It has the numbers in it that the President had. They directly reflect the President's request. If any Senator wants to come forward and show any number we put in there that is different from the President's numbers when he laid out his budget, then I would like to see it. Maybe we could correct it. But I don't think there is an error. I think we scrupulously followed the President's budget proposal request, and when people vote on it, they can know they are voting exactly on what he proposed. I don't think anybody will dispute the numbers we have in the budget.

Also, I note that some of our Democratic colleagues are not happy about having no budget produced by the Democratic side. They feel bad about it, and I understand that. But I would have thought we would have had some Members come down and complain about it, to say that they didn't think the Democratic leadership, the Democratic conference should have blocked Senator CONRAD and the Budget Committee from having a budget, that they should be handling this differently. But we haven't had that, so I guess everybody is basically happy on the Democratic side not to have to cast any tough votes.

Mr. President, how much time is remaining on this side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 4 minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, as we come to a conclusion of this debate, Senator HARKIN said something that was pretty insightful. He said: Show me your budget, and I will show you what you value.

Refuse to show me your budget, I will say, and I can say you are refusing to show what is important to you.

One of the things that has been brought up is the war costs. The war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan has been expensive, no doubt about it. Last year the total for both wars over 10 years reached $1.3 trillion—10 years—both wars. That was the deficit last year alone, $1.3 trillion. This year the war costs are declining. The year we are in, we are spending $118 billion on the war. Our deficit will be $1,200 billion. So eliminating all war costs would be less than 10 percent of the amount of our deficit.

I say that so we understand what has happened. Over 50 percent of our spending is in mandatory entitlement programs—Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, food stamps, retirement benefits. Those are huge and they are increasing at two, three times the rate of inflation. That is what puts us on an unsustainable course.

The President's budget goes against everything the experts said, against the debt commission he appointed, and refuses to confront these surging entitlement costs. That is a disappointment because we have nothing from the other side on how they would deal with them.

But the Members on this side have offered budgets, and Congressman RYAN offered a budget. They do begin to deal with this painful but difficult situation concerning the entitlement programs. I note the Budget Control Act they have been calling a budget had nothing to do with over 50 percent of the budget. It did not deal with those expenditures, it did not deal with the entitlements. That is another reason it is not a budget. It is a cap on discretionary spending. That is all that was. It was a step in the right direction but not a budget plan that would help us have a prosperous future.

This is an important day. I think it will cause the American people and all of us in Congress to confront the reality of a danger we face from debt. No matter how we vote this day, this next hour—even if we vote in what I think is the wrong way—hopefully this whole process would have caused all of us to confront the reality of the danger to the American Republic, the growing debt.

I would say from my experience it will be tough to deal with it, but I absolutely believe we can. It is not outside of the possibility and ability of this country to reverse our course. The kind of cuts we will need to have will not be such that will damage in any significant way the strength and health of America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I would ask Senator SESSIONS, if I might, for 2 additional minutes because of the time Senator LEAHY consumed?

Mr. SESSIONS. I appreciate that and will agree to those 2 additional minutes.

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

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator for his courtesy.

Mr. President, the place we agree is we have a long-term problem for this country that we must address. I attempted to lay before the Budget Committee, and did lay before the Budget Committee, the Bowles-Simpson plan. It is the one plan that has had bipartisan support. I hope before the year is over that we can go back to it because I think it holds the greatest potential.

A key difference Senator SESSIONS and I have is whether we have a budget for this year and next. I believe it is clear we do. The Budget Control Act that passed last year says that the allocations and spending levels set ''shall

apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget.'' That is for both 2012 and 2013.

I believe our Republican friends want to focus on that because they do not want to focus on the specifics of their budget plans. Recall, the last time they were in charge, when they controlled everything—the House and the Senate and the White House—the Republican policies led us to the brink of financial collapse. The proposals they are advancing today are a return to those failed policies. Remember what happened when they were in charge. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month and the economy was shrinking at a rate of almost 9 percent a year. That is why they do not want to focus on the substance of their plans.

Let's focus on the substance for a moment. Every Republican budget ends Medicare as we know it. One Republican budget cuts Social Security benefits by 39 percent. Every Republican budget cuts taxes for millionaires by at least $150,000 a year. And every Republican budget protects offshore tax havens.

I have shown on the floor many times a picture of this little building in the Cayman Islands that claims to be the home of 18,857 companies. It is not their home. They are not doing business out of this little five-story business in the Cayman Islands. They are doing monkey business. The monkey business they are doing is avoiding the taxes they owe. Every Republican budget protects this scam. That should not be allowed to continue.

I hope my colleagues reject these proposals. I hope we will vote no, and then get onto the serious business of a bipartisan plan to get America back on track, the Simpson-Bowles plan that I presented to the Budget Committee.

I yield the floor. I believe all time has expired?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The question is on the motion to proceed to S. Con. Res. 41.

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we have 1 minute on each side?

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, the President's budget is now before us. Last year it failed in this body 97 to 0. It failed in the House, the budget that he offered this year, 414 to 0. I expect it will receive no votes today. That is a stunning development for the President of the United States in his fourth year in office, to produce a budget for the future of our country at a time of fiscal danger, great financial and economic danger to our country, to not receive a single vote.

Maybe somebody will vote for it. Let me tell you why we should not. It does not change the debt course. It violates the budget agreement the President signed and Congress passed last year, by increasing spending over that level by $1.5 trillion. It throws off another $1.8 trillion in tax increases, essentially using tax increases to offset new spending programs, not to pay down the debt. It is the most irresponsible budget submitted. I urge my colleagues to vote no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, this is the budget. This is what Senator SESSIONS has presented as being the President's budget. Do you see a difference? This is what Senator SESSIONS describes as the President's budget. This is the President's budget. I think it is readily apparent, there is a big difference between the President's budget, which I hold in my hands, and what Senator SESSIONS has presented as being the President's budget. This is not the President's budget, so of course we are not going to support it. It is not what the President proposed.

I yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

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

The result was announced—yeas 0, nays 99, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 97 Leg.]

NAYS—99

Akaka	Franken	Mikulski
Alexander	Gillibrand	Moran
Ayotte	Graham	Murkowski
Barrasso	Grassley	Murray
Baucus	Hagan	Nelson (NE)
Begich	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Bennet	Hatch	Paul
Bingaman	Heller	Portman
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Pryor
Blunt	Hutchison	Reed
Boozman	Inhofe	Reid
Boxer	Inouye	Risch
Brown (MA)	Isakson	Roberts
Brown (OH)	Johanns	Rockefeller
Burr	Johnson (SD)	Rubio
Cantwell	Johnson (WI)	Sanders
Cardin	Kerry	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Sessions
Casey	Kohl	Shaheen
Chambliss	Kyl	Shelby
Coats	Landrieu	Snowe
Coburn	Lautenberg	Stabenow
Cochran	Leahy	Tester
Collins	Lee	Thune
Conrad	Levin	Toomey
Coons	Lieberman	Udall (CO)
Corker	Lugar	Udall (NM)
Cornyn	Manchin	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Warner
DeMint	McCaskill	Webb
Durbin	McConnell	Whitehouse
Enzi	Menendez	Wicker
Feinstein	Merkley	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Kirk

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the motion to proceed to H. Con. Res. 112.

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, at a time when our Nation has never, ever faced a deeper, more dangerous systemic debt threat than we face today, the Republican House, under the leadership of Congressman PAUL RYAN, has produced a budget that would change the debt course of America, create economic growth, put us on a path to financial stability, and do the things that a responsible budget should do. The President's budget utterly failed in that regard and has gotten no support. This budget will do the job.

People can disagree with this or that portion of it. I think this budget is a historic step in the right direction for this great Republic, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, this budget plan, the House Republican plan, ends Medicare as we know it. All the while, it provides $1 trillion of additional tax cuts to the wealthiest among us. It gives millionaires, on average, an additional tax cut of $150,000 a year. In addition, it cuts health care by $3 trillion and increases the number of uninsured in our country by 30 million people.

I urge my colleagues to reject this budget proposal.

Mr. HARKIN. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CONRAD. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Does this budget permit the interest rates on student loans to double on July 1?

Mr. CONRAD. It does.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam 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. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

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

The result was announced—yeas 41, nays 58, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 98 Leg.]

YEAS—41

Alexander	Corker	Inhofe
Ayotte	Cornyn	Isakson
Barrasso	Crapo	Johanns
Blunt	DeMint	Johnson (WI)
Boozman	Enzi	Kyl
Burr	Graham	Lee
Chambliss	Grassley	Lugar
Coats	Hatch	McCain
Coburn	Hoeven	McConnell
Cochran	Hutchison	Moran

Murkowski	Rubio	Toomey
Portman	Sessions	Vitter
Risch	Shelby	Wicker
Roberts	Thune	

NAYS—58

Akaka	Hagan	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Harkin	Paul
Begich	Heller	Pryor
Bennet	Inouye	Reed
Bingaman	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Blumenthal	Kerry	Rockefeller
Boxer	Klobuchar	Sanders
Brown (MA)	Kohl	Schumer
Brown (OH)	Landrieu	Shaheen
Cantwell	Lautenberg	Snowe
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Levin	Tester
Casey	Lieberman	Udall (CO)
Collins	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Conrad	McCaskill	Warner
Coons	Menendez	Webb
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Mikulski	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson (NE)	

NOT VOTING—1

Kirk

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the motion to proceed to S. Con. Res. 37.

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, the vote we are about to cast is on a motion to proceed to the budget I have introduced, one of the important features of which is within the customary 10-year budget window this budget would balance. It does not happen overnight. It takes 8 years to get there. But it does, in fact, balance, and it does it by essentially containing the rate of growth in spending. Only in the first year is there a spending cut, and that is less than 3 percent. Every year thereafter spending grows in this budget, but it grows a little more slowly than the alternative. It grows at a sustainable pace so that with normal economic growth we will reach a balance within 8 years and a modest surplus thereafter.

It does call for some of these structural entitlement reforms we need. Specifically, it would call for adopting the bipartisan Medicare reform plan that I would remind everyone permits senior citizens to continue to choose the traditional fee-for-service Medicare they have now—if that is their choice—but it does make other options we think would be more cost effective available as well.

It also adopts the President's recommendation by asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more for the Medicare benefits they enjoy. It asks for tax reform that we all know we need to generate economic growth, and it puts our budget on a sustainable path.

I urge Members to vote in favor of this motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, this is another unbalanced plan. There is very little in the way of revenue to reduce deficits and debt but deep spending cuts in priorities such as education and energy. In fact, this proposal cuts discretionary spending $1 trillion below the Budget Control Act, which cut $900 billion. In addition, this cuts $3 trillion in health care by ending Medicare as we know it and by block-granting Medicaid, holding hostage those who are the most vulnerable among us, children and the disabled.

I urge my colleagues to resist this proposal.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, will my colleague yield for a question?

Mr. CONRAD. I am happy to yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Does the Toomey budget we are about to vote on increase student loan interest rates on July 1 from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent?

Mr. CONRAD. It does permit that.

Mr. HARKIN. Well, I hope every Senator who votes on this knows, if they are voting for this budget, they are voting to double student loan interest rates on July 1.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. CONRAD. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

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

The result was announced—yeas 42, nays 57, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 99 Leg.]

YEAS—42

Alexander	Enzi	McConnell
Ayotte	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Murkowski
Blunt	Hatch	Paul
Boozman	Hoeven	Portman
Burr	Hutchison	Risch
Chambliss	Inhofe	Roberts
Coats	Isakson	Rubio
Coburn	Johanns	Sessions
Cochran	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Corker	Kyl	Thune
Cornyn	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Lugar	Vitter
DeMint	McCain	Wicker

NAYS—57

Akaka	Gillibrand	Murray
Baucus	Hagan	Nelson (NE)
Begich	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Bennet	Heller	Pryor
Bingaman	Inouye	Reed
Blumenthal	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kerry	Rockefeller
Brown (MA)	Klobuchar	Sanders
Brown (OH)	Kohl	Schumer
Cantwell	Landrieu	Shaheen
Cardin	Lautenberg	Snowe
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Collins	Lieberman	Udall (CO)
Conrad	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Coons	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Webb
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franken	Mikulski	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Kirk

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the motion to proceed to S. Con. Res. 42 introduced by the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. PAUL.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, like the previous three Republican budgets, this budget is silent on student interest rates. Anyone who asserts otherwise for good political theatre should know that it is untrue. This budget has nothing to do with student interest rates. I think we should have a debate on a little higher plane.

We are borrowing $50,000 a second. We are borrowing $4 billion a day, over $1 trillion a year. While America burns through a century of wealth, the President fiddles. The President's friends fuss and they produce no budget.

This budget balances in 5 years. It saves Social Security. It saves Medicare. It reforms and simplifies the Tax Code. I urge my colleagues to act now and vote for a budget that balances. Do something to save America from this looming debt crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, this plan has massive tax cuts for the wealthiest among us. This plan cuts discretionary spending $2 trillion below the Budget Control Act that cut $900 billion. This plan ends Medicare in 2 years. This plan repeals health care reform. Thirty million more people would be uninsured.

Perhaps most stunningly, this plan cuts Social Security benefits 39 percent. One can say it balances, but it balances at an extraordinary cost. And the cost is borne by those least able to bear the cost. I urge my colleagues to reject this plan.

Mr. HARKIN. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CONRAD. I would be happy to.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask the same question of the distinguished chairman: Would this budget have the interest rates double on student loans on July 1 from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent?

Mr. CONRAD. Well, it is hard to see how it would not. Let me say, in education, it cuts education 59 percent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

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

The result was announced—yeas 16, nays 83, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 100 Leg.]

YEAS—16

Barrasso	Johnson (WI)	Sessions
Coburn	Lee	Shelby
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
DeMint	Moran	Vitter
Enzi	Paul	
Hatch	Risch	

NAYS—83

Akaka	Franken	Merkley
Alexander	Gillibrand	Mikulski
Ayotte	Graham	Murkowski
Baucus	Grassley	Murray
Begich	Hagan	Nelson (NE)
Bennet	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Bingaman	Heller	Portman
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Pryor
Blunt	Hutchison	Reed
Boozman	Inhofe	Reid
Boxer	Inouye	Roberts
Brown (MA)	Isakson	Rockefeller
Brown (OH)	Johanns	Rubio
Burr	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Cantwell	Kerry	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Kohl	Snowe
Casey	Kyl	Stabenow
Chambliss	Landrieu	Tester
Coats	Lautenberg	Toomey
Cochran	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Collins	Levin	Udall (NM)
Conrad	Lieberman	Warner
Coons	Lugar	Webb
Corker	Manchin	Whitehouse
Cornyn	McCain	Wicker
Durbin	McCaskill	Wyden
Feinstein	Menendez	

NOT VOTING—1

Kirk

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I can have everyone's attention, we have one more vote this evening. The Republican leader and I have worked out something tentatively—I think we will be able to put it in writing in just a few minutes—where we will have two votes tomorrow at noon on the two Fed nominees.

I think most people know I moved last night to the FDA bill. I hope we won't have to file cloture on that and that we can just move to it and start the amendment process. That is what the people want, that is what we want, and that is what we are willing to do, so I hope we can do that. It is a wide-ranging bill, extremely important for the country, with relevant amendments. There are a lot of them to do, so I hope we can have an agreement to that effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided before the vote on the motion to proceed to S. Con. Res. 44 introduced by the Senator from Utah, Mr. LEE.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I remind my colleagues of the old adage that you can make excuses or you can make progress but you cannot make both.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, the Senator deserves to be heard.

Mr. LEE. I remind my colleagues of the old adage that you can make excuses or you can make progress but you cannot make both—at least not simultaneously.

Our current course is unsustainable. Maintaining the status quo will inevitably impair our ability to fund everything from defense to entitlements. So sticking to this course isn't the solution. It can't be the solution. And if followed as a solution, it will have an impact that will prove devastating to America's most vulnerable populations. It is for exactly that reason I have proposed this budget—a budget that balances within 5 years, a budget that simplifies the Tax Code, a budget that puts health care decisions back into the hands of individual families, individuals themselves, and their doctors, where those decisions properly belong.

We don't have much time. We have to get this done. I urge my colleagues to support this budget.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, this budget proposal has the most serious mistakes I have seen in 26 years of dealing with budgets in this Chamber. This budget starts with an $8 trillion mistake on the size of the deficit.

I have put up the calculation. This budget has Federal revenues of $27.5 trillion, budget outlays of $37.2 trillion, for a difference of $9.750 trillion. But it claims deficits of $1.750 trillion. That is an $8 trillion mistake.

No. 2, it has a $5.7 trillion mistake with respect to budget authority. If we add up the individual budget function totals, they are $5.7 trillion less than the aggregate budget authority totals in what is being offered by the Senator.

No. 3, this requires some committees to cut more spending than they have available to them in their resources. For example, the HELP Committee is instructed to save $2.7 trillion, and they only have $510 billion available to them to cut.

This budget is shot full of basic fundamental mistakes. It should not even be considered as a budget on the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. LEE. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

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

The result was announced—yeas 17, nays 82, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 101 Leg.]

YEAS—17

Barrasso	Grassley	Paul
Coats	Hatch	Risch
Coburn	Inhofe	Sessions
Crapo	Johnson (WI)	Thune
DeMint	Lee	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	

NAYS—82

Akaka	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Alexander	Graham	Murray
Ayotte	Hagan	Nelson (NE)
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Begich	Heller	Portman
Bennet	Hoeven	Pryor
Bingaman	Hutchison	Reed
Blumenthal	Inouye	Reid
Blunt	Isakson	Roberts
Boozman	Johanns	Rockefeller
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Rubio
Brown (MA)	Kerry	Sanders
Brown (OH)	Klobuchar	Schumer
Burr	Kohl	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kyl	Shelby
Cardin	Landrieu	Snowe
Carper	Lautenberg	Stabenow
Casey	Leahy	Tester
Chambliss	Levin	Toomey
Cochran	Lieberman	Udall (CO)
Collins	Lugar	Udall (NM)
Conrad	Manchin	Warner
Coons	McCain	Webb
Corker	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Cornyn	McConnell	Wicker
Durbin	Menendez	Wyden
Feinstein	Merkley	
Franken	Mikulski	

NOT VOTING—1

Kirk

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

STOP THE STUDENT LOAN INTEREST RATE HIKE ACT OF 2012—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

(The remarks of Senators GRASSLEY and LANDRIEU pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 462 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

Ms. LANDRIEU.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business.

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

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today we considered five separate budget proposals for the Federal Government. At first glance, that would appear to be the fiscally responsible thing to do. The families and small business owners I talk to back home in Kansas do that every year. They operate with a budget, and we know the Federal Government needs to do so as well. However, this Chamber has not passed a budget in 1,113 days. That is more than 3 years.

In my first speech on the Senate floor as a new Member of the Senate a little more than a year ago, I indicated to my Senate colleagues that my greatest concern for our country is our Nation's out-of-control spending. I am here today because I still have that concern. We spend too much money, and we no longer can delay the difficult decisions necessary to correct that problem.

Our national debt stands at more than $15 trillion. This enormous

amount of debt is slowing our economic recovery and threatening the prosperity of our future generations, who will have to pay for our fiscal irresponsibility.

Writing and passing a budget is one of the most basic responsibilities of Congress. It is required by law. The budget sets forth priorities and guidelines for the fiscal year and begins the process of determining how much money should be spent and which programs should be cut back, eliminated, or even further supported. Without a budget, the annual appropriations process—and I am a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and I want the appropriations process to work, but in many ways that appropriations process continues to be on hold. This is not the way to run our country. To put our country back on its path to fiscal responsibility, we must set the budget. We set budget limits, and then we have to stick to them.

Any serious conversation about the budget and Federal spending must include a candid assessment of our Nation's entitlement programs. Those programs include Social Security and Medicare. Mandatory spending makes up 56 percent of the Federal budget—if we had one. This percentage will only increase in years ahead as more Americans retire and fewer workers are there to replace them. Without addressing our long-term commitments, our attempts to significantly change our country's fiscal outlook will be limited.

As I said, I am a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, where our appropriations process deals with about 30 percent of spending on an annual basis. We have done a reasonable job—I hate to be overly complimentary to Congress—at holding the line on discretionary spending, that 30 percent we deal with every year. It has been pretty flatlined over the last several years, but you cannot solve our country's fiscal problems by only dealing with the 30 percent that we include in the appropriations process. We have to deal with the remaining portions of our budget.

The challenge of not only the appropriations process to determine how much money we spend every year but the broader issues of so-called entitlement spending cannot be ignored any longer. Of the five budgets we considered earlier today, four of them—all but President Obama's budget—contained serious proposals to these entitlements. I can critique every one of the four budgets that move in the right direction of balancing the budget. There are things I would do differently, but I commend my colleagues for offering serious solutions to serious problems.

It has bothered me greatly that when Members of the House or Members of the Senate offer a serious budget, they are immediately attacked from a political point of view as if we can continue to ignore the problems we face and simply make sound bites out of proposals that Members of the Senate and the House care very seriously about.

We have to work together to put forward commonsense solutions that will preserve these programs for future generations. This is not about ending those entitlement programs. In fact, the reports that recently came from nonpartisan sources tell us that both Medicare and Social Security will face significant shortfalls in the near future. Therefore, this is about taking care of those programs to see that they are available for those who need them in the future. I want to be able to tell every young person—when they ask, will I be able to get Social Security when I retire, I want that answer to be yes. If we don't deal with the issues, the answer cannot honestly be yes.

In Congress, we have a solemn obligation to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Our spending debate is oftentimes seen as something that is philosophical or academic or more likely just a partisan argument, but the truth is that out-of-control borrowing and spending has a very real consequence on the daily lives of every American and certainly on the economy in which we live and operate. It is about whether Americans can find a job, make payments on their homes and automobiles, and whether their children will have a bright future and the opportunity to pursue what we all call the American dream.

When we continue to fail to balance the budget, when we don't put ourselves on the path toward a balanced budget, it means increasing inflation, with higher interest rates and an uncertain economy, which results in fewer business investments and fewer jobs.

The greatest opportunity we have to improve the lives of Americans is to erect an environment where employers feel comfortable in investing in the future and create jobs so people can go back to work. When they go back to work, they can put food on their family's table, they can save for their children's education, they can save for their own retirement, and most importantly, every person in America will once again be able to pursue the American dream.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I would like to address a slightly different topic, which is the continuing conference on the highway bill. We passed a very good highway bill in the Senate. We passed it on time for the March 31 deadline when the highway trust fund was going to expire. We passed it in bipartisan fashion, with 75 Senators supporting it. We passed it after it came unanimously out of the Environment and Public Works Committee with the support of the chairman, Senator BOXER, and the ranking member, Senator INHOFE. We passed it after a very open and transparent floor process in which around 40 amendments were agreed to either by vote or agreement, and it has the support of everybody from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to labor, from the pavers to the environmentalists. So it is a good piece of legislation. It was done right.

The problem is that it is running up against a time deadline. As my director of transportation tells me, if we delay this too long, he has to start dropping projects off of this summer's highway work period because the time is slipping away as we dawdle here in Congress on this bill.

It is not just the Rhode Island Department of Transportation saying this. Standard & Poor's Global Credit Portal has a report, ''Increasingly Unpredictable Federal Funding Could Stall U.S. Transportation Infrastructure Projects.''

It says within the report:

> As the construction season begins in the northern half of the country, this continuing uncertainty in funding could force states to delay projects rather than risk funding changes or political gridlock come July.

So we need to get this done, and I have heard at this point that the House Republican conferees intend to hold the conference on this bill through late June, and if we do that, that will cost jobs in America, that will cost jobs in Rhode Island, that will cost jobs around the country because our transportation directors are going to have to take work scheduled for the summer and postpone it, and that is a very unfortunate turn of events. It has nothing to do with the merits.

Unfortunately, the House was not able to pass a highway bill of any kind, which is unfortunate because it is not the most complicated task. It is something we have been doing for decades around here. They couldn't get that done, and so what they have done now is gone to conference on the Senate bill without a bill of their own, and this appears to be causing delay. So I am here to urge that we all encourage the House Members of the highway conference committee to expedite their work as much as they can. Apparently there is a 2-week period that the House is taking off, and if it is delayed by 2 weeks so that Members can go home, I don't think that is a profitable use of our time.

There is a great deal of loose talk around here about jobs. We have even had bills that didn't relate to jobs called jobs bills because of gimmickry in the title. But this is a real jobs bill. This is 3.9 million jobs for the country, and it is 9,000 jobs for Rhode Island, as calculated in years of work—job years. We are just wasting that if we don't get this done on time.

So if people really want to do something about jobs, they can get the highway bill moved along rapidly so that the work can be done in this summer work session.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

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.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise tonight to speak about the war in Afghanistan. I have spoken on the Senate floor many times over the last number of years about the war. I have done so because I believe the American people and our servicemembers in the field deserve a policy worthy of their efforts and their sacrifice and a thorough examination of the issues at hand. I have done so also because when it comes to matters of war, the Senate has an important responsibility to ask tough questions of any administration.

I believe we are entering a critical phase in our engagement in Afghanistan which will have implications for our eventual drawdown of troops in the year 2014.

Earlier this month the President spoke to us from Kabul on the new Strategic Partnership Agreement known by the acronym SPA. Of course, this is an agreement with Afghanistan. He described a transition plan which focuses on protecting and promoting shared Democratic values, advancing long-term security, reinforcing regional security and cooperation, social and economic development, and strengthening Afghan institutions and governance.

I agree with the general approach laid out in the Strategic Partnership Agreement, but I have several outstanding questions and concerns regarding U.S. engagement in Afghanistan. I wish to describe some of these concerns and lay out specific steps the administration should take with respect to the war to ensure that U.S. security interests and the tangible security, political, and economic gains in Afghanistan are, in fact, protected.

I have participated in more than 20 hearings on Afghanistan and Pakistan with the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. I have personally chaired four hearings on aspects of our engagements in the region. I have visited Afghanistan and Pakistan three times, most recently in August 2011, with the Presiding Officer, Senator BENNET, along with Senator BLUMENTHAL and Senator WHITEHOUSE. When we were there, we met with, as I have done on other visits, U.S. military and civilian leaders, as well as senior government officials in both countries.

Through this engagement, I have sought to examine U.S. goals and progress in this war within three broad areas: first, the formation of representative political institutions; second, the overall security environment; and third, the development of key sectors in Afghan society, including education, health, the economy, and the well-being of women and girls. In examining these factors, it is clear to me that a responsible drawdown of U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan must be concurrent with not only progress on security and an increase in well-trained Afghan national security forces but with a strong commitment to a transparent political process in Afghanistan.

We should work to ensure that there will not be a crumbling of institutions similar to that seen prior to Afghanistan's civil war in the 1990s. In fact, without representative political institutions, I am concerned that the training of the Afghan national security forces could, in fact, be counterproductive and that we would end up developing a force that answers to a dysfunctional political system.

Politics and governing institutions matter a great deal, and there are tangible steps the United States can take to support Afghanistan's political development in the short term. Let me be clear. We should be under no illusions that Afghanistan's political system will, nor necessarily should, reflect our Western model developed over centuries. But there are universal principles that should apply in Afghanistan, including the inclusion of all key political groups and transparency in elections and governance. In fact, the adoption of these universal principles is perhaps the only antidote to continued decades of conflict.

First, the 2014 transition to Afghan leadership will require the active participation of the constellation of ethnic groups in Afghanistan. They will need to have some confidence in the political process or Afghanistan could very easily again descend into civil conflict, similar to that seen in the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal in the 1990s. The opposition represented in what was formerly known as the Northern Alliance will likely be among the most skeptical. The United States can play an important role in bringing the interested parties together for dialog to identify areas of concern and a path forward looking toward 2014 and beyond.

Second, Presidential elections are scheduled to take place in 2014. According to the Constitution, President Hamid Karzai is limited to two terms and should step down. President Karzai has seen his country through a very difficult and historic time. Afghanistan's elections—the foundational act in a democratic system—have historically not met international standards and have established the basis for an unresponsive government, unresponsive government officials, and, unfortunately, widespread corruption. A peaceful transition of power in Afghanistan is not only good for the country and good for its democratic institution, it is vital to our own transition out of Afghanistan.

Third, Afghanistan's Independent Electoral Commission needs to become a truly independent body. Currently, the President selects the commissioners, creating the suspicion that the body is biased. In accordance with international standards, the commissioners should be selected by a body that reflects the broad consensus of the Afghan people, not just the President. A statutory check on executive authority is needed to ensure the impartiality of the body in the years to come and enhance public confidence in the electoral system overall.

Fourth, President Karzai has issued a Presidential decree which allows him to nominate the 5 national and 133 provincial commissioners of the Electoral Complaints Commission. This body also needs to be independent from the executive branch to remove any perception of bias. During the last election, there was a lack of transparency in the handling of these electoral complaints. Afghan authorities need to take steps now to ensure that the national and provincial commissioners are fair and transparent in their work. As it stands now, the political opposition does not trust the Electoral Complaints Commission to equitably deal with inevitable disputes that emerge from the process.

Throughout this process, the United States should emphasize the importance of international standards in the conduct of elections and stand ready to support a process that is based on those universally accepted principles. We know at the Bonn conference in 2011 Afghanistan pledged—pledged—to strengthen and improve its electoral process. We must hold them to that commitment. The United States should condition its aid in support of the administration of the 2014 election based on these reforms. Let's send a very clear message: We will not be a party to funding the administration of an election similar to those conducted in the years 2009 and 2010. The administration must begin to act now. Electoral reforms take time to adopt and implement. The clock is ticking.

While political challenges abound in Afghanistan, the Parliament has emerged as an important check on the executive and over the past several years has begun to exercise more of a voice in governance. We have seen several examples in recent years where the Parliament has weighed in on important issues. Moreover, 27 percent of the Afghan Parliamentarians are women—a stunning statistic compared to where we were 10 years ago. The Parliament's upward trajectory is a promising pillar of the democratization process, but more can be done. The United States can play an important role in exposing Afghan Parliamentarians to legislative experiences from other and different developing democracies and the opportunity to meet their counterparts in other Parliaments.

During our trip to Afghanistan last August, I and Senators WHITEHOUSE, BENNET, and BLUMENTHAL had the fortunate opportunity to travel to five of

the ISAF regional commands. We saw firsthand the progress made by our airmen, soldiers, marines, and sailors on the ground. Due to their efforts, the enemy has lost territory and influence. According to the Pentagon, the number of attacks by militants dropped in 2011 for the first time in 5 years.

There has been undeniable progress in pushing back the Taliban, but these military gains are delicate and will be short-lived without an Afghan force that can assume more responsibility for security. I discussed these issues with LTG William Caldwell, the former commander of the NATO effort to train the Afghan forces. Lieutenant General Caldwell has been ably replaced by LTG Daniel Bolger. We have seen significant progress in the training and deployment of the Afghan Special Forces Units which, according to the Pentagon, have made ''impressive strides towards becoming an independent and effective force.'' We have also seen growing independence of the Afghan regular units. As of the end of March, 13 ANA kandaks have been designated as able to operate independently with advisers. In September of 2011, there was only one kandak with that designation. We have gone from 1 unit to 13 in a rather short period of time, so we know there is progress.

But despite this progress, however, challenges in training the Afghan National Security Forces, in fact, remain.

First, the Afghan security forces still do not have an elite Pashtun officer corps and only 6.6 percent of the enlisted recruits are southern Pashtuns. This is a significant shortfall that must be addressed if the security forces are going to develop the cohesion necessary to ably represent the ethnic makeup of the country and address ongoing security challenges in the south.

Second, NATO currently requires 2,774 trainers to conduct its training mission but faces a shortfall of 440 positions. While this capability has improved, the training shortfall remains stubbornly high and has an adverse impact on NATO's ability to adequately train the Afghans in a timely manner. Our NATO partners can and should do more to help address this deficit.

Finally, I have concerns about the long-term pricetag associated with the Afghan National Security Forces. While investing in these forces will be a fraction—a small fraction—of the $100 billion to $120 billion a year currently spent in Afghanistan by our government, we must work to ensure that the force is right-sized to the security challenges in the country and that there are strict accountability measures in place to ensure that the Afghan National Security Forces abide by all U.S. standards in terms of human rights and the Geneva Conventions.

While we have made progress on the battlefield, the Taliban and terrorist groups like the Haqqani network remain capable of spectacular attacks across the country and, as we know, in Kabul, the capital. Thirty-four percent of the attacks by militants took place in Regional Command East, an area where the Haqqani network is most active. I believe that the Afghan National Security Forces will be capable by 2014 of providing security in much of the country, but we need to maintain a capability to attack and disrupt terrorist groups in the country that seek to project force outside of Afghanistan's borders and do harm to U.S. interests.

Central to the political effort is the ongoing effort to reconcile with the Taliban. I have a high degree of skepticism that this can work, at least in the short term. The Taliban has shown little interest in compromise, and recent events show that this group is willing to target civilians and to conduct devastating terror attacks against the Afghan people. Ultimately, there does need to be a political end to this conflict, as there is in all wars. But how we get there is important, and the administration must set clear guidelines. In the meantime, I support maintaining pressure on the Taliban until it accepts the Afghan Constitution and agrees to peacefully participate in the political process.

During our visit to Afghanistan last August, we also had the honor to meet with several of Pennsylvania's servicemembers. Since 2001, Pennsylvania has lost 80—80—servicemembers, and 589 have been wounded. These courageous individuals gave what President Lincoln called the ''last full measure of devotion'' to their country. We owe them a debt of gratitude, and we owe a debt of gratitude, as well, to their families and to veterans returning from the field. I, like a lot of our colleagues, have visited with our wounded warriors and their families at Bethesda, Walter Reed, and other places, and we keep them in our thoughts and prayers every day. The courage and commitment of these young Americans is hard to describe in a speech and it is hard to illustrate, but it does demonstrate the best of who we are as a country, and we see that every day.

We know in the area of development as well, there are enormous challenges across a lot of sectors in Afghanistan that will likely extend for years. Prior to the civil war, Afghanistan was one of the poorest countries in the world. After decades of war, Afghanistan's minimal infrastructure was destroyed. The challenges today to significant progress are indeed substantial. Government corruption obstructs any serious effort at rule of law and any basic respect for contracts, which is a fundamental element of business growth. The precarious security environment also serves to deter any international investment. Poppy growth, fueled by the heroin trade, remains rampant. Women continue to be subjected to unspeakable violence and discrimination across the country.

Amid these daunting challenges, the United States should prioritize a few key areas for developmental progress, so as to mitigate the challenges leading to 2014.

The foundational basis for development in any society is the educational system. We know that in 2002 only 900,000 students were enrolled in school. Just 9 years later, 2011, more than 8 million children were enrolled in school, 35 percent of whom were girls. This will have a long-term, long-lasting effect on Afghan society, and the United States should be proud of this element of our engagement and should seek to protect those gains. I and other Senators, when we saw this, were pleased to see that the partnership agreement prioritized the access to, and the enhanced quality of, education.

We have also seen significant strides in the field of health care. In 2002, only 9 percent of Afghans had access to basic health services. Today that number has grown to 64 percent of the population. More children live to see their fifth birthday than ever before in Afghanistan. Health care too was emphasized in the agreement that the President talked about recently, and it focused on basic health services and specialized care for women and children.

These are real achievements, but they are very fragile.

Also fragile are the overall gains made for women and girls in Afghanistan. I was privileged, as I know Senator BENNET, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and Senator BLUMENTHAL were privileged, to meet with a group of Afghan women leaders during our August 2011 trip. We were all tremendously inspired by their determination to continue to fight for women's rights in the face of blatant oppression and violence.

In 2010, I cochaired a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on the plight of women in Afghanistan. We must preserve the progress that women and girls have achieved in the past 10 years. Empowered women have an immensely positive impact on their communities, investing resources in education, health care, and other basic needs. They also dissuade young men from turning to militancy. In 2011, Secretary Clinton told a group of Afghan women—and I am quoting—''We will not abandon you, we will stand with you always.'' We as a nation have an obligation to stand by that commitment to the women and girls of Afghanistan. It is not only the right thing to do, it is in our national security interest to do this as well.

I agreed, like many did, with the findings of a 2011 report by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which made three main recommendations with respect to U.S. assistance to Afghanistan. First, it called for a multiyear civil assistance strategy for the country. Second, the report called for a ''Reevaluation of the performance of stabilization programs in conflict zones.'' Third, it called for a focus on sustainability. The report argued that all U.S. assistance projects should meet three basic criteria: They should be ''necessary, achievable, and sustainable.'' This simple concept is critically

important. A great deal of funding and resources has been expended in Afghanistan, much of it on important and necessary programs. But with the withdrawal of international troops and a commensurate decrease of funds going into the country, there is a distinct possibility that Afghanistan could experience an economic depression which could have dramatic security implications. There is time now to address this problem by conducting a careful review of all U.S. assistance to the country. Those programs that are not sustainable should be phased out. While this may have painful short-term consequences, it will be better for the long-term viability of the Afghan economy.

The United States and the international community should consistently reemphasize that while there will be a transition in 2014, this does not mean the wholesale withdrawal and disengagement from Afghanistan. The Strategic Partnership Agreement has helped send this message. The United States will still have significant security concerns in the country and should maintain a strong counterterrorism capability. Work will still remain in providing support and assistance to the Afghan National Security Forces. The international community can also continue to play a key role in helping Afghan society to develop.

All of this falls squarely within our national security interests, and all parties in Afghanistan and in the region should hear this message.

Finally, I will end with a few comments about Pakistan. I continue to believe that Pakistan is too important to U.S. interests for us to sever ties or significantly diminish the relationship. We know we have had trouble in our relationship, but we know a couple of other things as well. Pakistan has lots of nuclear weapons. It is a hotbed of Islamic extremism. It also provides the best logistics routes for our supplies headed into and out of Afghanistan, and Pakistan will play an essential role in ensuring the transition to a peaceful Afghanistan.

Despite the seemingly insurmountable challenges and at times divergent strategic interests, we must continue to find a way forward and work together where our interests do overlap. Pakistan has made significant sacrifices in countering extremism within its borders, mostly against forces that represent a direct threat to the state itself. It has yet to go after the Haqqani network in a serious way. It continues to provide a haven for the Quetta Shura Taliban, which is the headquarters of those seeking to destabilize the Afghan State.

Pakistan has not taken adequate measures to confront the proliferation and trade in illicit bombmaking materials which have killed thousands of its own citizens and hundreds and hundreds of our U.S. troops across the border in Afghanistan. Taking all of this into account, there is a significant element of Pakistani society that we cannot consider allies. This is why I strongly support the conditionality built into U.S. assistance to Pakistan, which requires that the Pakistani authorities make significant progress in countering terrorism and attacking IED networks. If they do not take steps to address these issues, this assistance will be significantly cut, and it should be.

For more than 2 years I have worked to address this critical problem of improvised explosive devices, which are responsible for the majority of deaths and injuries among our servicemembers in Afghanistan. The primary explosive ingredient in IEDs used in southern Afghanistan is calcium ammonium nitrate, CAN. It is also used as a fertilizer and is produced in factories in Pakistan. I have been adamant that the Pakistani Government must significantly increase its commitment to regulating the bomb components and preventing them from being smuggled across the border into Afghanistan.

In June 2010 I introduced S. Res. 570, which called for an increased effort by Pakistan to effectively monitor and regulate the manufacture, sale, transport, and use of ammonium nitrate fertilizer in order to prevent its entrance into Afghanistan. The resolution passed the Senate unanimously on June 28, 2010.

During our recent visit to Pakistan, I discussed this issue with several senior government officials, as did Senator BENNET, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and Senator BLUMENTHAL. The Pakistani leaders expressed an interest in countering the proliferation of bomb components and presented to us an action plan for interdicting these materials. However, the proof of their commitment has yet to be seen through the implementation of this plan.

In December of 2011, I introduced an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would require the Secretary of Defense to certify that Pakistan is demonstrating a continuing commitment to and making significant efforts toward the implementation of a strategy to counter IEDs. This provision, unfortunately, was removed during the conference committee. The final version of the bill requires the Secretary of Defense to produce a report on Pakistan's efforts to counter IEDs.

I continue to believe combating the threat posed by IEDs is one area where our interests do in fact overlap with Pakistan. At this time of frayed relations, IEDs continue to kill Pakistanis, Afghans, and, of course, Americans on the battlefield. By working together against this common threat, we can begin to rebuild confidence in the relationship and make progress toward more vexing strategic issues that affect our countries.

In September of 2010, I gave a speech on Afghanistan and Pakistan at the Army War College in Carlisle, PA. Former Secretary of War Elihu Root believed that the Army War College was established in 1903, ''not to promote war, but to preserve peace by intelligent and adequate preparation to repel aggression.''

That is what Secretary Root said all those years ago. As we look forward to 2014 and a long-term relationship with the people of Afghanistan, all of our support for representative political institutions, improving the security environment, and Afghan social and economic development are intelligent and adequate preparation to repel aggression.

The next year and a half will be very consequential. If the United States works to strengthen representative institutions, bolsters the Afghan security forces, and maintains sustainable development assistance, all will pay dividends for our peace and security for years to come.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to 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.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT of 2012

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last month, the Senate came together and passed the Leahy-Crapo Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012. Our legislation takes some much needed steps to help the most vulnerable victims of domestic and sexual violence, and it was passed with significant bipartisan support. The Leahy-Crapo Violence Against Women Act was an example of what we accomplish when we put politics aside and work to find real solutions to real problems facing real Americans.

Few laws have had a greater impact on the lives of women in this country than the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). By shining a light on the insidious crimes of domestic and sexual violence, this law(s initial passage nearly 20 years ago sent a powerful message that violence against women would no longer be tolerated. The days of dismissing these crimes with a joke or a shrug were over. The resources, training and law enforcement tools provided by VAWA transformed the criminal justice and community-based response to abuse. It gave support and protection to the victims who for generations had been blamed, humiliated and ignored.

With each reauthorization of this landmark law, Congress has repeatedly shown its bipartisan commitment to ending domestic and sexual violence by building on the protections in the initial legislation and expanding the reach of VAWA to meet the remaining unmet needs of victims.

The bill that I introduced with Senator CRAPO, and which passed the Senate with an overwhelming bipartisan majority just last month, is based on the successful tradition of preserving and enhancing protections. It is based on months of work with survivors, advocates, and law enforcement officers from all across the country and from across the political spectrum. We purposely avoided proposals that were extreme or divisive and selected only those proposals that law enforcement and survivors and the professionals who work with crime victims every day told us were essential. That is why the provisions in the Senate bill have such widespread support. More than 1,000 Federal, state, and local organizations have endorsed it, including service providers, law enforcement, religious organizations and many, many more.

The inclusive, open process of drafting this legislation is also why the Senate bill always had strong bipartisan support. It was a bipartisan effort from the beginning with eight Republican Senators cosponsoring the bill and seven more joining Democratic and Independent Senators in voting to pass the bill. We were able to move able to move to the bill without a filibuster, to consider amendments, which were rejected, and to pass the bill with almost 70 votes. We adopted a bill of which the Senate can be proud, because it serves the interests of the American people while improving support and protection for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

I am alarmed the other body—the House—has chosen a different path. Instead of building on the broad bipartisan support for the Senate-passed Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, Republican members of the House Judiciary Committee last week took up a bill, H.R.4970, that they crafted in back rooms without the input of those who dedicate their lives to helping victims. This afternoon the House Republican leadership brought that same bill to the floor, with only minor modifications that do little to respond to the urgent concerns of victims, and is forcing an up or down vote while blocking any attempts to modify the legislation in response to the concerns raised by victims and service providers around the country. Their legislation not only fails to include the critical improvements in the Senate bill that would increase protections for Native-American women, gay and lesbian victims, battered immigrant women, and victims on college campuses or victims in subsidized housing, it actually rolls back existing protections leaving many victims more vulnerable to sexual and domestic abuse. Among the most troubling provisions are those that drastically undercut important, longstanding protections that are vital to the safety and protection of battered immigrant victims.

As a result of this misguided effort, the House bill is strongly opposed by many of the leading organizations that know these issues best, including the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the American Bar Association, the YWCA, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and many, many more.

The thousands of local advocates and service providers around the country that make up the National Network to End Domestic Violence warned in a letter to the House Judiciary Committee that H.R. 4970 would (weaken, rather than enhance, protections for victims of domestic violence.(Sue Else, the President of that organization, lamented:

> This is an unprecedented departure from this effective law(s original intent. Thousands of victim advocates across the country recommended substantial improvements for the latest reauthorization, and the U.S. Senate accepted those recommendations in a bipartisan way. It is alarming that the House Judiciary Committee has not done the same.

The American Bar Association has stated:

> Unlike the recently passed Senate bill (S. 1925), which reflects discussions with more than 2,000 advocates and experts across the country, H.R. 4970 represents a retreat from the fight against domestic and sexual violence. It fails to add critical improvements to address the needs of underserved populations, like victims who are members of faith communities and those who are denied services because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and strips critical protections from existing law.

The YWCA, the largest provider of services for battered women in the country, calls the House bill a ''dangerous bill that puts the lives of millions of women across the nation at risk.'' These organizations represent those on the front lines against domestic and sexual violence. They are motivated by their desire to see all victims get the help they need.

Likewise, a number of faith-based organizations, such as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Association of Evangelicals, and nearly 20 other religious institutions have joined a letter stating that they are ''deeply troubled'' by the ''many provisions [in the House bill] that actually would roll back protections in current law for battered non-citizens, making them more vulnerable and, in some cases, endangering their lives.''

House Republicans are headed down the wrong path. In fact, when the Senate rejected their alternative to our bipartisan bill last month by a strong bipartisan vote of only 37 in favor and 62 opposed, I had hoped that would end the partisanship and the gamesmanship and we would be able to move forward together to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. I was encouraged to see the lead sponsor of the Republican alternative, the distinguished senior Senator from Texas, do just that and join with us to support the bipartisan Senate bill upon final passage. I commended Senator HUTCHISON for doing so. Likewise, we were buoyed by the support on final passage by the Senior Senator from Arizona, the Senators from Tennessee, Senator COATES of Indiana, Senator HOEVEN of North Dakota, Senator PORTMAN of Ohio and Senator VITTER of Louisiana.

Despite all this, House Republicans seem determined to destroy this bipartisan effort. As evidenced by the vote they are forcing today, they are intent on proceeding with their bill to roll back victim protections and insistent that it be done without the opportunity to consider the better, Senate-passed bill or, for that matter, any other amendments to their ill-conceived effort to undercut the Violence Against Women Act.

The House Republican bill not only fails to protect more victims, but actually weakens existing protections. I fear that it puts more lives at risk.

In its Statement of Administration Policy, the Obama administration correctly opposes the House bill, H.R. 4970, as a measure that ''would undermine the core principles of the Violence Against Women Act.'' It notes the House Republican bill ''retreats'' from the progress represented by the protections included in the bipartisan Senate-passed bill and ''weakens'' critical protections for victims. The House provisions ''senselessly remove existing legal protections, undermine VAWA's core purpose of protecting victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, frustrate important law enforcement objectives, and jeopardize victims by placing them directly in harm's way.'' It concludes with a threatened veto recommendation since the House measure ''rolls back existing law and removes long-standing protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.'' Never before, in either Republican or Democratic administrations, Republican- or Democrat-controlled Houses or Senates, has the Violence Against Women Act been used to increase the dangers to women and so consciously disregard the unmet needs of our most vulnerable victims. Never before.

Last week the White House Advisor on Violence Against Women noted that the House Republican bill ''adds burdensome, counter-productive requirements that compromise the ability of service providers to reach victims, fails to adequately protect Tribal victims, lacks important protection and services for LGBT victims, weakens resources for victims living in subsidized housing, and eliminates important improvements to address dating violence and sexual assault on college campuses.'' She is right.

The closed process by which the House Republican leadership insisted

its ill-conceived bill be rubberstamped breaks House Republican promises to allow amendments and proceed by an open amendment process. The House Republican bill's roll back of protections breaks the promise of the Violence Against Women Act to protect victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Never before has the Violence Against Women Act been used to increase the dangers to women and so consciously disregarded the unmet needs of our most vulnerable victims.

A recent New York Times editorial entitled ''Backwards on Domestic Violence'' had it right: ''House members on both sides of the aisle who are serious about combating domestic violence must work to defeat this atrocious bill.'' That sentiment was reinforced by a recent Los Angeles Times editorial which stated: ''Republicans in the House should drop their attempts to undermine the Violence Against Women Act and instead move swiftly to reauthorize and strengthen the existing program, as the Senate has already done.''

Today The Washington Post reports on another study by Human Rights Watch documenting sexual violence and harassment of female farmworkers. Congress should not be turning its backs to these battered and abused women. We should be moving forward promptly to adopt the provisions of the Senate-passed bill to protect the most vulnerable among us, women who are doubly victimized by abusers and by the fear that they have no recourse.

I thank Senators MURRAY, MENENDEZ and SHAHEEN for their strong statements in support of the Senate-passed Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act yesterday. I am disheartened by the decision of the House Republican leadership to try to push through their destructive bill over the clear objections of those very victims it is supposed to serve. I urge the supporters of the bipartisan Senate bill to continue our efforts to see that this carefully crafted legislation that meets the needs of so many people is finally passed into law.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Statement of Administrative Policy, the editorials from the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, and the letters to which I have referred.

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

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 4970—VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

(Rep. Adams, R–FL, and 40 cosponsors, May 15, 2012)

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 4970, a bill that would undermine the core principles of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA is a landmark piece of legislation that first passed the Congress in 1994 and has twice been reauthorized with overwhelming bipartisan support, each time with important improvements to strengthen VAWA. The Act transformed the Nation's response to violence against women and brought critically needed resources to States and local communities to address these crimes.

H.R. 4970 retreats from this forward progress by failing to include several critical provisions that are part of the Senate-passed VAWA reauthorization bill. For instance, H.R. 4970 fails to provide for concurrent special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction by tribal authorities over non-Indians, and omits clarification of tribal courts' full civil jurisdiction regarding certain protection orders over non-Indians. Given that three out of five Native American women experience domestic violence in their lifetime, these omissions in H.R. 4970 are unacceptable. The bill also fails to include language that would prohibit discrimination against LGBT victims in VAWA grant programs. No sexual assault or domestic violence victim should be beaten, hurt, or killed because they could not access needed support, assistance, and protection. In addition, H.R. 4970 does not include important improvements to the Clery Act found in the Senate-passed bill that would address the high rates of dating violence and sexual assault experienced by young people in college and other higher education institutions. The bill also weakens critical new provisions in the Senate-passed bill that would improve safety for victims living in subsidized housing.

H.R. 4970 also takes direct aim at immigrant victims of domestic violence and sexual assault by removing critical protections currently in law. H.R. 4970 allows abusers to be notified when a victim files a VAWA self-petition for relief, and it eliminates the path to citizenship for U visa holders—victims of serious crimes such as torture, rape, and domestic violence—who are cooperating with law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of these crimes. These proposals senselessly remove existing legal protections, undermine VAWA's core purpose of protecting victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, frustrate important law enforcement objectives, and jeopardize victims by placing them directly in harm's way.

The Administration urges the House to find common ground with the bipartisan Senate-passed bill and consider and pass legislation that will protect all victims. H.R. 4970 rolls back existing law and removes long-standing protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault—crimes that predominately affect women. If the President is presented with H.R. 4970, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
Washington, DC, May 7, 2012.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
House Judiciary Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN CONYERS,
Ranking Member, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH AND RANKING MEMBER CONYERS: The National Network to End Domestic Violence, which represents all of our nation's state and territorial domestic violence and dual domestic violence-sexual assault coalitions, their 2,000 member programs and the millions of victims they serve every year, opposes HR 4970, a bill introduced by Representatives Sandy Adams (R–FL) and Eric Cantor (R–VA) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

VAWA was initially passed in 1994 and subsequently reauthorized in 2000 and 2005 to meet the needs of victims. HR 4970 fails to meet, and in fact, weakens, rather than enhances, protections for victims of domestic violence. The network of survivors and advocates who work on a daily basis with courts, law enforcement, prosecutors, shelters, academic and medical institutions need VAWA's tools—its laws and programs—to help keep victims safe. All of us are alarmed that HR 4970 takes the wrong direction and will be dangerous for victims.

We are particularly concerned with provisions that erode critical safety measures for immigrant victims seeking safety and justice, fail to fix a jurisdictional issue for victims on tribal lands who are beaten by non-tribal perpetrators with near impunity, and turn a blind eye to lesbian, gay and other marginalized communities. If enacted, this bill would jeopardize victims' lives and embolden perpetrators of violence. HR 4970 also wrongly grows bureaucracy through the costly and excessive auditing of small non-profits. Resources would be better spent training and supporting those important organizations that provide these lifesaving services and advocacy. And finally, the emergency housing transfer section in this bill, which is intended to help victims flee violent, dangerous perpetrators without becoming homeless, is weakened by allowing the adoption of transfer policies to be ''voluntary'' by owners, managers and public housing agencies.

The U.S. House of Representatives has the opportunity to develop and pass a bipartisan VAWA that meets the needs of victims. HR 4970 is not such a bill. We look forward to working with the House Judiciary Committee and all Members of Congress to develop a bill that is reflective of the needs of all victims. Please contact Paulette Sullivan Moore, NNEDV's Vice President of Policy, at psmoore@nnedv.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

SUE ELSE,
President.

MAY 7, 2012.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN CONYERS,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH AND RANKING MEMBER CONYERS: On behalf of the undersigned faith leaders and faith-based organizations concerned about victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, and other forms of violence, we write to express our concerns about Title VIII of H.R. 4970, legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which we understand the House Committee on the Judiciary plans to mark up tomorrow.

Faith communities are on the front lines, identifying victims, providing refuge, referring victims and their families for services, and offering hope and healing. In times of crisis, victims often turn to faith communities and leaders for support and moral guidance because they see places of worship as a sanctuary from the horrors they have experienced. Through our ministry with victims, we have learned that abusers often exploit a victim's immigration status, leaving individuals extremely vulnerable and afraid to report the abuse to law enforcement, assist in the prosecution of crimes, and seek services.

Congress created VAWA in 1994, and it has voted twice since then to reauthorize the law, each time with broad bipartisan support. However, we are deeply troubled by Title VIII of H.R. 4970, as introduced. Title VIII contains many provisions that actually would roll back protections in current law for battered non-citizens, making them more vulnerable and, in some cases, endangering their lives. We urge you to strike these provisions from the bill before the measure is brought before the full House of Representatives for a vote.

VAWA is an effective tool in combatting the devastating crimes of domestic violence and providing lifesaving programs and services. We urge Congress to preserve and improve protections for vulnerable immigrant victims.

Sincerely,

Noel Castellanos, CEO, Christian Community Development Association; Rev. John L. McCullough, Executive Director and CEO, Church World Service; Wendy Tarr, Director, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice; Alex Baumgarten, Director of Government Relations, The Episcopal Church; Luis Cortes, President, Esperanza; Alexia Salvatierra, Director of Justice Ministries, Southwest California Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Patrick Carolan, Executive Director, Franciscan Action Network; Gideon Aronoff, President and CEO, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society; Orlando Crespo, National Director, La Fe Multi-Ethnic Ministries, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship/USA; Janet Mock, CSJ, Executive Director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

Linda Hartke, President and CEO, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach, Director, Mennonite Central Committee, U.S. Washington Office; Salam Al-Marayati, President, Muslim Public Affairs Council; Leith Anderson, President, National Association of Evangelicals; Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, President, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference; Rev. Gabriel Salguero, President, National Latino Evangelical Coalition; Jim Wallis, President and CEO, Sojourners; Johnny Young, Executive Director, Migration and Refugee Services, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; Lynne Hybels, Willow Creek Community Church; Deborah Fikes, Executive Advisor, World Evangelical Alliance; Stephan Bauman, President and CEO, World Relief.

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, May 7, 2012.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the American Bar Association, with nearly 400,000 members, I write to express our opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization bill introduced by Rep. Sandy Adams (R-FL), which is scheduled to be considered by the House Judiciary Committee on May 8, 2012. We urge members of the committee to oppose the bill.

VAWA has been the single most effective federal effort to respond to the epidemic of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in this country. The act has ensured that legal and social services are available to survivors, and that law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, attorneys and advocates are well-trained and equipped with cutting-edge resources to effectively address these crimes in their own communities.

Reauthorization of VAWA is critical, providing Congress with the opportunity to amend the act in order to combat domestic and sexual violence more effectively. For example, in 2000, Congress created the Legal Assistance to Victims grant program. It also created the U visa for immigrants who are victims of serious crimes and who have cooperated with authorities in the prosecution of the perpetrator, and it authorized funding for increased protection of older individuals and individuals with disabilities. And in 2005, it became unlawful to deny an individual housing assistance simply because the individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. Congress also created a new grant program to improve court responses to these crimes.

H.R. 4970 does not continue this tradition of improvement. Unlike the recently passed Senate bill (S. 1925), which reflects discussions with more than 2,000 advocates and experts across the country, H.R. 4970 represents a retreat from the fight against domestic and sexual violence. It fails to add critical improvements to address the needs of underserved populations, like victims who are members of faith communities and those who are denied services because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and strips critical protections from existing law.

The provisions of H.R. 4970 that significantly undermine protections available to vulnerable immigrant victims of violence are of particular concern. Before enactment of VAWA, abusive U.S. Citizens and Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) were able to use the immigration laws as a mechanism to further abuse and control their immigrant spouses and children. Perpetrators of domestic violence routinely would thwart, or threaten to thwart, the visa petitioning process. In creating a special application process for battered spouses and children of U.S. Citizens and LPRs, lawmakers recognized that many victims of domestic abuse were unwittingly victimized by the immigration system as well.

The current VAWA green card application process involves a ''self-petition,'' so that the abuser is not involved at all in the process and prohibits the government from releasing information about the existence of a VAWA immigration case to the abuser or others. H.R. 4970 removes those critical protections. A forced choice between deportation or safety from an abusive spouse or trafficker is the precise evil that the original self-petitioning provisions of the VAWA were intended to eliminate. H.R. 4970 creates obstacles for immigrant victims seeking to report crimes and increases the danger to victims by eliminating important confidentiality provisions.

Because it fails to improve upon our nation's response to domestic violence and sexual assault by ensuring that all populations are protected and in fact rolls back critical protections in existing law, the ABA urges you to oppose H.R. 4970. VAWA is a critical tool in the arsenal to address domestic and sexual violence, and it must be improved during this reauthorization process to address the needs of all victims and hold more offenders accountable.

Sincerely,

THOMAS M. SUSMAN,
Director, Governmental Affairs Office.

MAY 7, 2012.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As the largest provider of battered women's services in the United States, with over 1300 locations in 47 states, the YWCA is deeply invested in the safety and health of all women. The YWCA serves over half a million women each year through its anti-violence programs, providing much needed access for victims of violence to 24-hour crisis hotlines, emergency shelter, counseling services, legal assistance, child care, economic empowerment programs and transitional housing. The YWCA strongly opposes any legislation that puts victims' lives at risk, and as such, opposes H.R. 4970 to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) introduced by Rep. Sandy Adams (R-FL).

For nearly 18 years, VAWA has provided a national, streamlined response to address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. H.R. 4970 cuts back on critical provisions outlined in S. 1925, passed last month, that protect some of the most vulnerable women in our communities, and as a result, is a dangerous bill that puts the lives of millions of women across the nation at risk.

Under H.R. 4970, immigrant women will be required to conduct interviews for U-visa petitions in person, which does not take into consideration the unfortunate reality of many victims of violence where their movement is strictly limited or closely monitored by their abusers. In addition, H.R. 4970 would eliminate key confidentially measures by allowing USCIS officers to notify and interview the abusers. Not only will this keep immigrant victims from reporting abuse, but it will put their lives at risk if they do proceed to apply for a U-visa. Studies indicate that the two most heightened periods of danger for victims of abuse are when they are pregnant and when they decide to leave an abusive situation—disregarding the importance of confidentiality and informing the abuser of the victims' intent to leave will undoubtedly lead to greater danger for the very people that this bill purports to assist.

H.R. 4970 disregards the epidemic rates of violence in Indian Country by allowing batterers to avoid prosecution on Tribal lands. By doing so, the bill fails to hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their actions and sends a clear message to Native victims of violence to remain silent and endure abuse. Without explicitly addressing the issue of accountability, Native victims will continue to remain fearful of reporting crimes of abuse. H.R. 4970 also strips all support for LGBT victims of abuse, claiming that they are not the 'right' victims. The YWCA supports all women and victims of abuse regardless of sexual orientation, immigration status, or race, and does not stand for isolating entire subsets of the community that face unique barriers to accessing services. By excluding the LGBT community in the bill, H.R. 4970 it prevents providers from serving ALL women, and no one should be denied help based on their sexual orientation.

H.R. 4970 fails to provide inclusive provisions that address the unique needs of underserved communities, which would in turn endanger the lives of millions of women across the nation. The YWCA supports legislation that is trauma informed, victim centered, and evidence based, and is opposed to any provisions that force victims to negotiate their safety when seeking assistance from abusive situations.

In short, we urge you to oppose H.R. 4970.

Please contact Desiree Hoffman, Director of Advocacy and Policy at dhoffman@ywca.org or Qudsia Jafree, Field and Policy Coordinator at qjafree@ywca.org should you have questions.

Sincerely,

DESIREE HOFFMAN,
YWCA USA, Director of Advocacy and Policy.

[From the New York Times]

BACKWARD ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In an all-too-rare show of bipartisanship, 15 Senate Republicans joined with the Democratic majority last month to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, the landmark 1994 law that is key to efforts against domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Unfortunately, the lopsided 68-to-31 Senate vote halted G.O.P. opponents only temporarily. The House Judiciary Committee last week approved its version of the reauthorization bill, which not only omits improvements the Senate bill made to the law but also removes existing protections for immigrant women, putting them at greater risk of domestic and sexual abuse.

The Senate's measure ensures that victims are not denied services because they are gay or transgender. It also strives to ensure that domestic violence crimes committed by non-Indian men in tribal communities are prosecuted. The Senate bill also would modestly

expand the availability of special U-visas for undocumented immigrants who are victims of domestic violence. That move was supported by law enforcement to encourage victims to come forward and testify against their abusers.

The regressive House alternative removes these and other improvements, including new protections for students on college campuses. The House measure would eliminate a confidentiality requirement in current law that protects the identity of immigrant women who file domestic violence complaints against a spouse who is a citizen or legal resident and allows the women to apply for legal status on their own.

House Republicans claim there is a big fraud problem in this area, but there is no hard evidence of that. And their plan to end the centralized handling of these issues by a Vermont-based office would undermine the government's ability to detect untruthful stories.

House members on both sides of the aisle who are serious about combating domestic violence must work to defeat this atrocious bill. If that fails, the Senate will need to insist on fixing it during the reconciliation process.

[From latimes.com, May 15, 2012]

PARTISANSHIP AND THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

The House needs to reauthorize the law, without limits, as it has in the past, so Republicans can demonstrate that helping battered women is more important than political games.

The political climate in Congress is so noxious these days that even a law that originally passed with overwhelming bipartisan support because it provided much-needed help to abused women is now a partisan issue. That's shameful. Republicans in the House should drop their attempts to undermine the Violence Against Women Act and instead move swiftly to reauthorize and strengthen the existing program, as the Senate has already done.

First enacted in 1994, the law has been renewed twice without a fight. Last week, however, some of the same GOP lawmakers who once endorsed the law retreated, voting in committee to strip out provisions designed to protect immigrants. Under VAWA as it has long existed, if an immigrant married to a U.S. citizen or a green-card holder—and therefore eligible to stay in the country permanently—can show evidence of abuse, he or she may file independently without having to rely on the abusive spouse. VAWA's gender-neutral protections apply to legal and illegal immigrants and allow the victim to file confidentially.

Confidentiality is crucial. As the Republican-led House Judiciary Committee noted in its 2005 report to reauthorize VAWA and expand protections, without such guarantees, an abuser could try to derail a spouse's green-card application or push to have him or her deported. A battered woman whose application depends on her abusive husband certainly might think twice about filing if she knew her abuser would be notified that she was seeking help without him.

Eliminating the confidentiality provision is one of several changes House Republicans would like to make to weaken the law. They argue that the changes are necessary to combat fraud, in which immigrants falsely claim to have been abused in order to obtain visas. But where are the data and studies that fraud is a problem? Immigrant victims who petition for visas under VAWA are already required to supply ample evidence of abuse, such as police reports or medical records. And applications undergo intense scrutiny. In fiscal 2011, immigration officials denied nearly a third of those petitions.

The House reauthorization bill also seeks to undercut a provision that allows undocumented immigrants who assist in prosecutions of serious crime for U visas, and ultimately obtain green cards. The proposed changes would allow victims to obtain temporary visas only. Surely, even those lawmakers who embrace anti-immigrant legislation can appreciate that U visas help protect American citizens too, by encouraging witnesses to step forward without fear of deportation. That's why the program enjoys the backing of many law enforcement groups.

The House will vote on Wednesday. It should reauthorize VAWA without limits, as it has in the past, and demonstrate that helping battered women, those who are immigrants, isn't a partisan issue.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I rise to highlight for my colleagues how Congress now has a critical opportunity to support the competitiveness and prosperity of American agriculture. We need to move the farm bill forward. It is fitting that this week marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Federal Department solely dedicated to meeting the needs of America's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

Agriculture is at the heart of Colorado's history and cultural fabric. It also continues to be one of our most significant economic drivers. At a time when many sectors are struggling to find growth, Colorado farmers and ranchers are more productive than ever, finding innovative ways to harness growing consumer demand for agricultural products both at home and in overseas markets.

As evidence of this success, agriculture is the one sector of the U.S. economy that boasts a trade surplus. During the first 2 months of 2012, Colorado exports of agricultural products grew by 25 percent over the same period in 2011, led by an 80-percent increase in dairy exports. This good news comes on the heels of several consecutive years of double-digit increases in Colorado agriculture exports.

The USDA is part of this success story. Colorado farmers and ranchers work closely with local USDA employees to support the productivity of their operations and to maintain the health of their land and water resources. It is a vital partnership. And with expiration looming on many programs important to Colorado agriculture, I can think of no better way to commemorate the USDA's 150th anniversary than by reauthorizing the farm bill.

Over the last several months, the Senate and House committees on agriculture have come together to craft a bipartisan farm bill that not only provides America's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities with the tools they need to keep growing but also makes a significant contribution toward important national deficit reduction goals. The farm bill passed by the Senate Agriculture Committee makes very significant progress in simplification, accountability, and taxpayer savings.

Using feedback I received from over 20 listening sessions statewide, I worked to secure Colorado's top farm bill priorities. In particular, I am encouraged by the farm bill's revamped conservation title. It maintains vital authorities for land and water protection while also consolidating over 20 existing conservation programs to provide producers and landowners with much needed flexibility.

I also strongly support efforts by the Senate Agriculture Committee to strengthen the Federal crop insurance program. Time and time again, Colorado farmers have told me that affordable crop insurance is the single most important risk management tool the USDA can provide to producers for addressing today's economic and ecological challenges.

According to Colorado State University, agriculture contributes $40 billion toward the State economy annually. Of course, the benefits of a strong farm economy extend far beyond the farm. It means stronger energy, transportation, and retail sectors. It also allows us to provide food assistance to the most vulnerable populations at home and in countries suffering from famine due to drought and conflict.

In short, reauthorizing the farm bill is one the most important things this Congress can do to provide farmers and ranchers with the certainty they need to plan for the future. It will help to keep rural America growing and thriving, and it will help to invigorate an economy just now getting back on its feet. Acting on this legislation during USDA's 150th year would make the accomplishment even better.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO FATHER RICHARD J. KELLEY

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and honor my friend, Father Richard J. Kelley, a Catholic priest who has devoted decades of service in parishes across New Hampshire. It is my privilege to congratulate him as he celebrates his 40th anniversary of ordination to priesthood.

Father Kelley was born in Boston, MA, on May 10, 1943. He was raised in Needham and West Roxbury and graduated from Catholic Memorial High School in 1961. His seminary studies took place at the Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, CT, and Catholic University in Washington, DC.

In addition to his commitment to the Catholic Church, Father Kelley has always reached out to help those in need. Before his ordination to priesthood, he spent time performing inner-city social work in Kansas City, MO. Shortly thereafter, Father Kelley was ordained to priesthood on May 20, 1972, at the St. Joseph Cathedral in Manchester, NH.

Since offering his first Mass at St. Joseph Church in his hometown of Needham, Father Kelley has spent many years serving parish churches in cities and towns across New Hampshire. As an associate pastor, he led Seacoast parishioners at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish in Hampton and St. Michael Parish in Exeter. He also served at St. Joseph Cathedral in Manchester.

On October 7, 1985, Father Kelley was appointed to his first pastorate at St. Catherine Parish in Charlestown, followed by over a decade of service at St. Patrick Parish in Jaffrey. So many New Hampshire parishes have been blessed to have Father Kelley's guidance, and his message of faith and devotion has touched many lives.

Since 2000, Father Kelley has served as the Pastor of St. Christopher Parish in my hometown of Nashua. In addition to his role as leader of the parish, Father Kelley is also a familiar face to the students at St. Christopher's Catholic School, where his patience, kindness, and humility serve as an inspiring example.

The impact of Father Kelley's 40 years of service can perhaps best be witnessed every Christmas. He receives hundreds of holiday cards from parishioners and friends he has met throughout his lifetime. He hangs up each one to decorate the walls and doors of his office, completely covering each surface and eventually spilling into the hallways. This seasonal collage reflects the many valued friendships he has cultivated throughout his career.

Father Kelley's impact continues to reach far beyond the parish walls. In addition to his responsibilities at St. Christopher's, he has assisted other community members through his service as the Nashua Police Department chaplain, as a former board member of Harbor Homes, and through his continued support of Catholic Memorial High School.

I am honored to recognize Father Richard Kelley as his many friends help him mark his 40th anniversary of ordination to priesthood. His loyalty and dedication to the Catholic Church and to his parishioners is unwavering—St. Christopher's is blessed and fortunate to have his guidance. I am grateful for Father Kelley's leadership and his many years of service to the Catholic Church in communities across New Hampshire.●

REMEMBERING JUDGE ROBERT E. COYLE

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Judge Robert E. Coyle, a talented jurist, a respected member of the community, and a kind and gentle man. Judge Coyle passed away on May 7 in Fresno at age 82.

A Fresno native, Robert Coyle received his B.A. from Fresno State College in 1953 and his J.D. from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 1956. After law school, he began his legal career as a deputy district attorney in Fresno County before working as an associate at Hansen, McCormick, Barstow and Sheppard from 1958 to 1961 and as partner at McCormick, Barstow, Sheppard, Coyle and Wayte from 1961 to 1982.

Judge Coyle was nominated to the Eastern District bench by President Reagan, confirmed by the Senate on March 31, 1982, and served as chief judge of the district from 1990 to 1996, when he took senior status and continued to take cases until 2006.

Judge Coyle played an instrumental role in the construction of new Federal courthouses in Sacramento and Fresno. For 13 years, he led the effort to build the Fresno courthouse, often seen shuttling from his chambers to the construction site with his hard hat in hand. His passion for this project once prompted him to ride in a suspended platform to some 300 feet above the ground to get a glimpse of the view that is now enjoyed by the building's occupants and visitors. After taking in the views of his beloved hometown and the breathtaking Sierra and beautiful Coastal Range, Judge Coyle compared his experience to ''riding on a cloud.''

I am proud to have introduced legislation that led to the naming of the Federal courthouse in downtown Fresno as the Robert E. Coyle United States Courthouse. The nine-story building stands as a reminder to the community and people of California of the dedicated work of Judge Robert E. Coyle.

Judge Coyle was always admired for his sharp intellect, collegiality, and gentlemanly ways. A giving person, he lent his time and talents to a number of community causes, including service on the board of trustees of the United Way Advocate. In his leisure time, he enjoyed spending time at the family cabin above Bass Lake.

I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife of 59 years, Faye; his son and daughter-in-law, Robert and Kim; and his daughter and son-in-law, Barbara and Michael Vellone; and his grandchildren, Hunter, Sydney, Morgan, and Matthew.

Judge Coyle will be greatly missed.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. THEODORA KALIKOW

● Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on April 23, 2012, Dr. Theodora J. Kalikow gave her last lecture as president of the University of Maine Farmington and received a standing ovation from an overflow audience at the campus's largest auditorium. In that same spirit, I rise today to express my gratitude to a great leader and good friend for 18 years of outstanding service to the people of Maine.

There are many ways to describe what Theo as she is known to colleagues, students, and friends has meant to our State. One is to note that in 1998, her fourth year as president, the University of Maine Farmington was named to U.S. News and World Report's best college list for the first time. This year, UMF celebrated 15 consecutive years of receiving that hard-earned and well-deserved recognition.

Another way is to consider the deep affection alumni and people throughout Maine have for this remarkable institution. As just one example, in 2007 UMF opened its new Education Center that integrates technology with teaching and learning. This major expansion was made possible only through the generosity of countless individuals, businesses, and organizations. Over the years, this kind of overwhelming support has enabled this small school of just 2,000 students to keep pace with the top colleges and universities in the country.

Responding to the needs of an ever-changing society is one of the richest traditions a college can have. The traditions Dr. Kalikow has upheld began a century and a half ago when the people of rural Franklin County joined together to establish Maine's first public institution of higher education. When the first class of 31 students matriculated at the new Farmington Normal School in 1864, they did so in a setting that was described by a University of Maine historian as ''rough, crude, and plenty humble.''

Under Dr. Kalikow's leadership, UMF has upheld another noble tradition that of contributing to the entire region by adding to its cultural life, teaching in local classrooms, coaching youth athletics, and helping youngsters learn everything from swimming to foreign languages. From the Health and Fitness Center to the Mantor Library, the doors of UMF are open to the community.

In her last lecture, Dr. Kalikow drew a strong connection between the America we know today as a place of unsurpassed equality, freedom, and opportunity and the ''rough, crude, and plenty humble'' foundation of public higher education laid in Farmington, ME, and other frontier communities across the Nation so many generations ago. These ordinary citizens knew that education was a necessary condition of creating a successful society, she said, and we today are the beneficiaries of their investment.

Mr. President, Dr. Theo Kalikow has increased that investment through an ongoing commitment to teaching and learning. On behalf of the people of Maine, I thank Dr. Kalikow for her contributions to our State and wish her all the best in the years to come.●

CONGRATULATING ANGELA FOREMASTER

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate a student from my home State for being recognized as one of Nevada's top youth volunteers of 2012. Angela Foremaster, a senior at Legacy High School in Las Vegas, was

honored with the Prudential Spirit of Community Award for her advocacy on behalf of foster children and homeless teens in the Greater Las Vegas area. I am proud to recognize Ms. Foremaster for this accomplishment as she serves as a role model for students across the nation striving to make a difference in the lives of America's youth.

Having five adopted siblings, Ms. Foremaster understands the importance of supporting organizations that find adoptive families for children who wait in foster care. She has dedicated more than 1,000 hours to foster organizations around Nevada to assist their efforts to provide a supportive community for children. One winter, as she helped a group prepare for the holiday season, Ms. Foremaster noticed that they weren't providing children with stockings for Christmas. This experience encouraged her to hang flyers, asking for donations and small gifts to help her fill stockings for adoptive children and displaced teens. Ms. Foremaster was thrilled to receive generous donations that enabled her to fill 250 stockings to help bring the holiday spirit to kids in needs.

I am so appreciative that Ms. Foremaster is raising awareness of the needs of our country's struggling youth. In this tough economic period, America's children deserve our attention more than ever. Since coming to Congress, I have supported legislation that assists individuals who have fallen on hard times, recognizing the importance of temporary safety nets. It is of paramount importance in this distressed economy that we keep the needs of our most vulnerable at the forefront while focusing on solutions to our nation's long-term economic problems.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in congratulating a young Nevadan for her incredible determination to assist our nation's youth. The citizens of Las Vegas are fortunate to have such a generous volunteer who selflessly gives back to her community and exemplifies the very best America's youth has to offer.●

COLONEL BRIAN DUBIE

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to Col. Brian Dubie, a fifth-generation Vermonter who is retiring on June 2 after a long and distinguished career in the Vermont Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. Brian served as Vermont's 78th Lieutenant Governor and has devoted his life to serving his State and his country.

Upon graduating high school in Essex Junction, Brian enrolled in the U.S. Air Force Academy. Even though the flight he took to Colorado was his first time on an airplane, Brian already knew that he loved aviation. Growing up, his father an officer in the Vermont Guard would bring the family to watch the planes take off and land from Burlington. Those excursions made vivid and lasting impressions on young Brian.

When he returned home to attend the University of Vermont, Brian joined the Vermont Air National Guard and flew F–4s and then F–16s, eventually rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. In 1998, he joined the U.S. Air Force Reserve where he now holds the rank of colonel and serves as an emergency preparedness liaison officer.

Brian's service has touched thousands of Americans outside of Vermont. Following the September 11 attacks, Brian procured and coordinated the distribution of badly needed cell phones and radios for emergency responders at Ground Zero. For his actions he was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal. When Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast in 2005, Brian mobilized and ensured that civilian responders had the support they needed. For his achievements at the Hurricane Operations Center, he earned another Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

Admirable as they are, Brian's achievements are not surprising considering his roots in a family who values service and duty to country. His mother Janice worked as an operating room nurse at what was then the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont. His father Clem was a colonel in the Vermont Guard where he served full-time as a personnel officer. His brother Michael is the adjutant general of Vermont.

Brian is also a tireless promoter of the Vermont business community. He was the motivational force behind the Vermont Aerospace and Aviation Association. He also served as the unofficial Vermont ''ambassador'' to Quebec a position he took on with such fervor that some Quebec officials called him Mr. Ambassador.

I am proud of all that Brian has accomplished for Vermont and our country. While he may be retiring from the Air Force, I know that his service to both State and Nation is far from over. I wish him, his wife Penny, and his family all the best.●

RECOGNIZING UPRIGHT FRAMEWORKS

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, in February, the New York Times ran a heartbreaking story about Robert and Wilma Hartford, two elderly Peru, ME residents unable to pay for basic heating during the State's bitter cold winter, and a heating oil dealer's personal struggle to assist them. As a result, the outpouring of support for this couple was astonishing, as neighbors, generous New York Times readers across the country, and local small businesses sought to help. One such business, Upright Frameworks in Wilton, ME, was happy to lend a hand. This small firm's assistance to the Hartfords during their time of need illustrates the generosity of Mainers, consistently rising to the occasion to help a neighbor, while demonstrating enormous potential for curbing our exorbitant energy costs. Today I wish to recognize Upright Frameworks for their compassion and tireless efforts to improve energy efficient building techniques.

Owner and founder Josh Wojcik began Upright Frameworks in 2008, after moving back home to Maine following a 9-year term in environmental policy in New York. As a trained environmentalist and graduate from the Structural Insulated Panel, SIP, School in West Virginia, Josh is dedicated to ensuring that buildings take full advantage of energy efficiency. Josh developed the idea for Upright Frameworks while assisting his father, Tom Wojcik, a long-time Mainer Builder, on construction projects throughout the State. As individuals continually inquired about energy efficiency and going ''green,'' Josh saw an opportunity to utilize his skills in Maine.

Despite the challenging construction market, today Upright Frameworks employs 12 individuals. As a new innovative construction solution, this small firm specializes in installing structural insulated panels which have been on the forefront of energy efficiency. For existing structures, the company performs energy audits and weatherization retrofits to ensure that buildings have the most cost-effective energy systems in places.

When Josh learned of the Hartfords' struggle, he was determined to help. With an existing home such as the Hartfords, the first step was to evaluate the project and determine the most cost-effective method to reduce energy costs. For Josh, reducing the heat loss in the attic was paramount to addressing energy efficiency. In collaboration with several other local Maine businesses and donations from across the country, Josh was able to effectively make a difference by reducing air leakage in the Hartfords' home by an astonishing 63 percent. This drastic reduction will allow the couple to substantially reduce their home heating costs for years to come.

While energy costs are still a major issue facing my State, I applaud Upright Frameworks' ability to achieve real results with their creative use of energy efficiency to alleviate the burdens of home-heating costs. This company's selfless commitment to helping fellow Mainers in need truly warms my heart. I am proud to extend my praise to Josh Wojcik and everyone at Upright Frameworks for their dedication and offer my best wishes for their continued success in building a new energy future and improving the daily lives of Mainers.●

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER WITH RESPECT TO BLOCKING THE PROPERTY OF PERSONS THREATENING THE PEACE, SECURITY, OR STABILITY OF YEMEN—PM 48

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the ''order'') declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Yemen and others to threaten Yemen's peace, security, and stability.

The order does not target the entire country of Yemen or its government, but rather targets those who threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen, including by obstructing the implementation of the agreement of November 23, 2011, between the Government of Yemen and those in opposition to it, which provides for a peaceful transition of power that meets the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people for change, or by obstructing the political process in Yemen. The order provides criteria for the blocking of property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to: have engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen, such as acts that obstruct the implementation of the agreement of November 23, 2011, between the Government of Yemen and those in opposition to it, which provides for a peaceful transition of power in Yemen, or that obstruct the political process in Yemen; be a political or military leader of an entity that has engaged in the acts described above; have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the acts described above or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

The designation criteria will be applied in accordance with applicable Federal law including, where appropriate, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA,
THE WHITE HOUSE, *May 16, 2012.*

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4045. An act to modify the Department of Defense Program Guidance relating to the award of Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence administrative absence days to members of the reserve components to exempt any member whose qualified mobilization commenced before October 1, 2011, and continued on or after that date, from the changes to the program guidance that took effect on that date.

At 2:04 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 205. An act to amend the Act titled ''An Act to authorize the leasing of restricted Indian lands for public, religious, educational, recreational, residential, business, and other purposes requiring the grant of long-term leases'', approved August 9, 1955, to provide for Indian tribes to enter into certain leases without prior express approval from the Secretary of the Interior, and for other purposes.

H.R. 365. An act to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

H.R. 1864. An act to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

H.R. 3534. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to revise requirements related to assets pledged by a surety, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3874. An act to provide for the conveyance of certain cemeteries that are located on National Forest System land in Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota.

H.R. 4240. An act to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 201(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6431 note), as amended, and the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Speaker appoints the following member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Commission on International Religious Freedom for a term ending May 14, 2014: Mr. Elliot Abrams of Virginia.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 205. An act to amend the Act titled ''An Act to authorize the leasing of restricted Indian lands for public, religious, educational, recreational, residential, business, and other purposes requiring the grant of long-term leases'', approved August 9, 1955, to provide for Indian tribes to enter into certain leases without prior express approval from the Secretary of the Interior, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

H.R. 1864. An act to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 3534. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to revise requirements related to assets pledged by a surety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3874. An act to provide for the conveyance of eight cemeteries that are located on National Forest System land in Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 4240. An act to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following bill was discharged from the Committee on Energy and Natural resources, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2947. An act to provide for the release of the reversionary interest held by the United States in certain land conveyed by the United States in 1950 for the establishment of an airport in Cook County, Minnesota; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 3187. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to revise and extend the user-fee programs for prescription drugs and medical devices, to establish user-fee programs for generic drugs and biosimilars, and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. LIEBERMAN, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

H.R. 2415. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 11 Dock Street in Pittston, Pennsylvania, as the ''Trooper Joshua D. Miller Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3220. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 170 Evergreen Square SW. in Pine City, Minnesota, as the ''Master Sergeant Daniel L. Fedder Post Office''.

H.R. 3413. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1449 West Avenue in Bronx, New York, as the ''Private Isaac T. Cortes Post Office''.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. LIEBERMAN for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*Joseph G. Jordan, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy.

*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 Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 3188. A bill to increase the authorized number of Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. PORTMAN:

S. 3189. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to place synthetic drugs in Schedule I; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PORTMAN:

S. 3190. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to place synthetic drugs in Schedule I; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN of Ohio (for himself and Mr. ALEXANDER):

S. 3191. A bill to improve provisions of title 23, United States Code relating to the use of HOV facilities; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. LUGAR, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 3192. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act by establishing an F-4 nonimmigrant visa for aliens pursuing an advanced degree in mathematics, engineering, technology, or the physical sciences in the United States, to authorize such aliens to become permanent residents if they obtain employment in the United States related to their field of study, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. AKAKA, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 3193. A bill to make technical corrections to the legal description of certain land to be held in trust for the Barona Band of Mission Indians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mrs. HAGAN:

S. 3194. A bill to require the establishment of a small business common application and web portal for purposes of Federal small business assistance programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. INHOFE:

S. 3195. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain fishing reels; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. Res. 462. A resolution recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges faced by children in the foster care system, acknowledging the dedication of foster care parents, advocates, and workers, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Mr. BINGAMAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. Res. 463. A resolution designating May 19, 2012, as ''National Kids to Parks Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota (for himself and Mr. THUNE):

S. Res. 464. A resolution commemorating the 70th anniversary of Ellsworth Air Force Base; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. Res. 465. A resolution recognizing that the Governor of the State of Colorado has proclaimed 2012 as the ''Year of Water''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 577

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 577, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify eligibility for the child tax credit.

S. 960

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 960, a bill to provide for a study on issues relating to access to intravenous immune globulin (IVG) for Medicare beneficiaries in all care settings and a demonstration project to examine the benefits of providing coverage and payment for items and services necessary to administer IVG in the home.

S. 1299

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1299, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of the establishment of Lions Clubs International.

S. 1335

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1335, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide rights for pilots, and for other purposes.

S. 1929

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1929, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Mark Twain.

S. 2134

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2134, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for certain requirements relating to the retirement, adoption, care, and recognition of military working dogs, and for other purposes.

S. 2165

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2165, a bill to enhance strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 2189

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2189, a bill to amend the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and other laws to clarify appropriate standards for Federal antidiscrimination and antiretaliation claims, and for other purposes.

S. 2234

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2234, a bill to prevent human trafficking in government contracting.

S. 2241

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2241, a bill to ensure that veterans have the information and protections they require to make informed decisions regarding use of Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 2245

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2245, a bill to preserve existing rights and responsibilities with respect to waters of the United States.

S. 2250

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) and the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2250, a bill to prevent homeowners from being forced to pay taxes on forgiven mortgage loan debt.

S. 2296

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2296, a bill to amend the Higher Education Opportunity Act to restrict institutions of higher education from using revenues derived from Federal educational assistance funds for advertising, marketing, or recruiting purposes.

S. 2371

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2371, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to permit employers to pay higher wages to their employees.

S. 2374

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2374, a bill to amend the Helium Act to ensure the expedient and responsible draw-down of the Federal Helium Reserve in a manner that protects the interests of private industry, the scientific, medical, and industrial communities, commercial users, and Federal agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 2554

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2554, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2017.

S. 3180

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 3180, a bill to require the Department of Defense to develop a plan to track and respond to incidents of hazing in the Armed Forces.

S. RES. 399

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 399, a resolution calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 402

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 402, a resolution condemning Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army for committing crimes against humanity and mass atrocities, and supporting ongoing efforts by the United States Government and governments in central Africa to remove Joseph Kony and Lord's Resistance Army commanders from the battlefield.

S. RES. 429

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 429, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Malaria Day.

S. RES. 434

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 434, a resolution supporting the goal of preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer's disease by the year 2025, as articulated in the draft National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease from the Department of Health and Human Services.

S. RES. 446

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 446, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations should not be allowed to exercise control over the Internet.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. AKAKA, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 3193. A bill to make technical corrections to the legal description of certain land to be held in trust for the Barona Band of Mission Indians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation that will correct an error in the Native American Technical Corrections Act of 2004.

The intent of section 121 of the 2004 law was to put a parcel on the northern edge of the Barona reservation, in San Diego County, into trust for the tribe. Unfortunately the bill identified a parcel on the southern edge of the reservation and put that in trust.

The mistake is compounded by the fact that the land north of the reservation is owned by a non-Indian property owner. The landowner now cannot sell or modify his property without permission from the tribe and the Department of the Interior.

The Barona Band of Mission Indians Land Transfer Clarification Act corrects this mistake.

The bill removes the private property on the northern side of the reservation from trust status; and the bill places the correct parcel in trust for the Barona tribe on the southern edge of the reservation.

The Barona Land Transfer Clarification Act closely follows an agreement brokered by Congressman DUNCAN HUNTER and his staff. Congressman HUNTER, and former Congressman Duncan Hunter, Sr. before him, brought the Band, the County of San Diego and the neighboring homeowners to the negotiating table.

The agreement they reached, embodied in this legislation, is a product of compromise. The end product is something that everyone agrees is better than the status quo. That is how compromise works.

The Tribe supports the legislation. The Homeowners and the County have reviewed and approved the language.

For the County and Homeowners, the findings section is the most important part of the bill.

This section addresses the ongoing water dispute between the tribe and its neighbors.

The fourth finding is particularly important if—the tribe uses the land to bring additional water into the area, the effort is only authorized if it also addresses the water needs of the neighboring off-reservation property.

Homeowners in the area have noticed diminished groundwater supplies in recent years, and they have looked to the tribe to help resolve the issue. In this arid part of the State, this is a significant concession on the part of the Tribe, and it is the cornerstone of the entire agreement.

I am hopeful that we can quickly pass this legislation and undo this unfortunate mistake. By enacting the Barona Land Transfer Clarification Act, all parties will gain some certainty that their issue will be resolved.

Finally, I am proud that my colleague from California Senator BOXER, and Senate Indian Affairs Committee Chairman DANIEL AKAKA have joined me as original cosponsors.

Once this legislation is sent over to the House, I know that Congressman HUNTER and the San Diego Delegation stand ready to join our fight to resolve this issue.

This strong, bi-partisan, bi-cameral support gives me confidence that this simple, straightforward piece of legislation is one that the Senate can pass very quickly.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 3193

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 ''Barona Band of Mission Indians Land Transfer Clarification Act of 2012''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the legal description of land previously taken into trust by the United States for the benefit of the Barona Band of Mission Indians may be interpreted to refer to private, nontribal land;

(2) there is a continued, unresolved disagreement between the Barona Band of Mission Indians and certain off-reservation property owners relating to the causes of diminishing native groundwater;

(3) Congress expresses no opinion, nor should an opinion of Congress be inferred, relating to the disagreement described in paragraph (2); and

(4) it is the intent of Congress that, if the land described in section 121(b) of the Native American Technical Corrections Act of 2004 (118 Stat. 544) (as amended by section 3) is used to bring water to the Barona Indian Reservation, the effort is authorized only if the effort also addresses water availability for neighboring off-reservation land located along Old Barona Road that is occupied as of the date of enactment of this Act by providing guaranteed access to that water supply at a mutually agreeable site on the

southwest boundary of the Barona Indian Reservation.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to clarify the legal description of the land placed into trust for the Barona Band of Mission Indians in 2004; and

(2) to remove all doubt relating to the specific parcels of land that Congress has placed into trust for the Barona Band of Mission Indians.

SEC. 3. LAND TRANSFER.

Section 121 of the Native American Technical Corrections Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–204; 118 Stat. 544) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—The land referred to in subsection (a) is land comprising approximately 86.87 acres in San Diego County, California, and described more particularly as follows: T. 14 S., R. 1 E. San Bernardino Meridian; Section 21, SW¼ SW¼, excepting the north 475 ft.; W½ SE¼ SW¼, excepting the north 475 ft.; E½ SE¼ SW¼, excepting the north 350 ft.; Together with that portion W½ SE¼, lying southwesterly of the following line: Beginning at the intersection of the southerly line of said SE¼ Section 21 with the westerly boundary of Rancho Canada De San Vicente Y Mesa Del Padre Barona as shown on United States Government Resurvey approved January 21, 1939; thence northwesterly along said boundary to an intersection with the westerly line of said SE¼; containing 68.75 acres more or less; Section 28, NW¼ NW¼, excepting the east 750 ft.; containing 17.02 acres more or less.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(d) CLARIFICATIONS.—

''(1) EFFECT ON SECTION.—The provisions of subsection (c) shall apply to the land described in subsection (b), as in effect on the day after the date of enactment of the Barona Band of Mission Indians Land Transfer Clarification Act of 2012.

''(2) EFFECT ON PRIVATE LAND.—The parcel of private, non-Indian land referenced in subsection (a) and described in subsection (b), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the Barona Band of Mission Indians Land Transfer Clarification Act of 2012, but excluded from the revised description of the land in subsection (b) was not intended to be—

''(A) held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Band; or

''(B) considered to be a part of the reservation of the Band.''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 462—RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, ACKNOWLEDGING THE DEDICATION OF FOSTER CARE PARENTS, ADVOCATES, AND WORKERS, AND ENCOURAGING CONGRESS TO IMPLEMENT POLICY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 462

Whereas National Foster Care Month was established more than 20 years ago to bring foster care issues to the forefront, highlight the importance of permanency for every child, and recognize the essential role that foster parents, social workers, and advocates have in the lives of children in foster care throughout the United States;

Whereas all children deserve a safe, loving, and permanent home;

Whereas the primary goal of the foster care system is to ensure the safety and well-being of children while working to provide a safe, loving, and permanent home for each child;

Whereas there are approximately 408,000 children living in foster care;

Whereas there were approximately 254,000 youth that entered the foster care system in 2010, while over 107,000 youth were eligible and awaiting adoption at the end of 2010;

Whereas children in foster care experience an average of 3 different placements, which often leads to disruption of routines and the need to change schools and move away from siblings, extended families, and familiar surroundings;

Whereas youth in foster care are much more likely to face educational instability with 65 percent of former foster children experiencing at least 7 school changes while in care;

Whereas children of color are more likely to stay in the foster care system for longer periods of time and are less likely to be reunited with their biological families;

Whereas foster parents are the front-line caregivers for children who cannot safely remain with their biological parents and provide physical care, emotional support, education advocacy, and are the largest single source of families providing permanent homes for children leaving foster care to adoption;

Whereas children in foster care who are placed with relatives, compared to children placed with nonrelatives, have more stability, including fewer changes in placements, have more positive perceptions of their placements, are more likely to be placed with their siblings, and demonstrate fewer behavioral problems;

Whereas an increased emphasis on prevention and reunification services is necessary to reduce the number of children that are forced to remain in the foster care system;

Whereas more than 27,900 youth ''age out'' of foster care without a legal permanent connection to an adult or family;

Whereas children who age out of foster care may lack the security or support of a biological or adoptive family and frequently struggle to secure affordable housing, obtain health insurance, pursue higher education, and acquire adequate employment;

Whereas foster care is intended to be a temporary placement, but children remain in the foster care system for an average of 2 years;

Whereas volunteers, guardians, mentors, and workers in the child-protective-services community play a vital role in improving the safety of the most valuable youth and work hard to increase permanency through reunification, adoption, and guardianship;

Whereas due to heavy caseloads and limited resources, the average tenure for a worker in child protection services is just 3 years;

Whereas on average, 8.5 percent of the positions in child protective services remain vacant;

Whereas States, localities, and communities should be encouraged to invest resources in preventative and reunification services and postpermanency programs to ensure that more children in foster care are provided with safe, loving, and permanent placements;

Whereas Federal legislation over the past 3 decades, including the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96–272), the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (Public Law 105–89), the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–351), and the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Public Law 112–34) provided new investments and services to improve the outcomes of children in the foster care system;

Whereas May is an appropriate month to designate as National Foster Care Month to provide an opportunity to acknowledge the child-welfare workforce, foster parents, advocacy community, and mentors for their dedication, accomplishments, and positive impact they have on the lives of children; and

Whereas much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges faced by children in the foster care system, acknowledging the dedication of foster care parents, advocates, and workers, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system;

(2) encourages Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system;

(3) supports the designation of May as National Foster Care Month;

(4) acknowledges the special needs of children in the foster care system;

(5) recognizes foster youth throughout the United States for their ongoing tenacity, courage, and resilience while facing life challenges,

(6) acknowledges the exceptional alumni of the foster care system who serve as advocates and role models for youth who remain in care;

(7) honors the commitment and dedication of the individuals who work tirelessly to provide assistance and services to children in the foster care system; and

(8) reaffirms the need to continue working to improve the outcomes of all children in the foster care system through parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) and other programs designed to—

(A) support vulnerable families;

(B) invest in prevention and reunification services;

(C) promote adoption and guardianship in cases where reunification is not in the best interests of the child;

(D) adequately serve those children brought into the foster care system; and

(E) facilitate the successful transition into adulthood for children that ''age out'' of the foster care system.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, as cofounders and cochairs of the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, Senator LANDRIEU and I offer a resolution to recognize May as National Foster Care Month.

The resolution is an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges faced by children in the foster care system. It is also a time to acknowledge the dedication of foster care parents, advocates, and workers who are changing the lives of children every day.

National Foster Care Month was established more than 20 years ago to bring foster care issues to the forefront. Today we continue to see almost a half million children who are unable to remain at home because of abuse or neglect or because of other family issues.

During this separation, foster youth face loneliness, instability, and grief. Unfortunately, children in foster care experience an average of three different placements which often lead to disruption of routines. Some are required to change schools and move away from siblings, extended families, and familiar surroundings. They face educational instability and, as a result, score lower on all academic measures than peers.

Foster youth have to overcome misperceptions and stigmas and deal with emotional pain and trauma that comes from such separation. It becomes a reality for many children every day. In 2010, about 254,000 children entered into care. While many are reunified with their families or adopted into new ones, more than 107,000 children were awaiting adoption at the end of 2010.

The Senate Caucus on Foster Youth is providing a voice for these foster young people. Senator LANDRIEU and I founded this caucus in 2009 to raise awareness of issues challenging foster youth, including educational stability, substance abuse, sexual exploitation, and the overprescription of psychotropic drugs.

We hear from youth about policies that affect their quality of life. Among other activities, the caucus sponsors a speakers series to bring the best ideas from the field to us policymakers in Washington, DC.

Today I invite my colleagues to join us on this caucus, to get involved and to make a difference. Senator LANDRIEU and I created the foster care caucus in the Senate to focus on all youth in the system, but we have particular focus on older children who may lack the security or support of a biological or adoptive family. These kids tend to age out of the foster care system, then struggle in creating a stable life that many of us often take for granted. More than 27,900 youth age out of foster care without a legal, permanent connection to an adult or family. We must focus on how to reduce this number from year to year. We have made great strides over the years, and we have done so in a bipartisan manner.

In 2006, the Senate Finance Committee held the first hearings on child welfare in more than a decade. The hearings led to passage of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act, which improved programs designed to help troubled families, provided grants for States and community organizations to combat methamphetamine addiction and other substance abuse, and increased case worker visits for children in foster care. It also supported grants to strengthen and improve collaboration between courts and child welfare agencies.

In 2008 I introduced the bill that became the Fostering Connection to Success and Increasing Adoption Act. This bipartisan bill made it easier for children to stay in their own communities and be adopted by their own relatives, including grandparents, aunts, and uncles. It provided incentives for States to move children from foster care to permanent adoptive homes, and it made all children with special needs eligible for Federal adoption assistance.

The law also broke new ground by establishing opportunities to help kids who age out of the foster care system at age 18 by giving States the option to extend their care in helping them pursue educational and vocational training.

Last year, to try to prevent children from having to enter the foster care system in the first place, I worked to reauthorize grants that support families who struggle with substance abuse and improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children who are not in their homes or are likely to be removed from their homes because of substance abuse by parents.

Children in the foster care system yearn for permanency, and these grants help keep families together when possible so the children are not subject to the many difficulties they face in the foster care system.

But Congress, as you know, must be vigilant. We must always keep our eyes on the prize; that is, a safe, loving and permanent home for every child. We must always stress prevention as well as reunification and the reunification services because these two key components are necessary to reduce the number of children who are forced to remain in foster care.

Finally, let me take a moment to pay tribute to many volunteers, guardians, mentors, and workers in the child protective service community. Every person in this field plays a vital role in improving the safety of our most vulnerable youth, and our country is better off for that. They are dedicated and important to thousands of children and can be very positive influences for families across the country.

This month of May is the time to pay tribute to the community. It is time to remember these young people. More important, it is time to encourage others to get involved and, hence, make a difference. It is my hope that this awareness will extend beyond me, and people will recognize the need to step up and to fight for these vulnerable youth on a daily basis. I encourage Members to cosponsor our resolution, and I especially appreciate the cooperation and working relationship I have had with Senator LANDRIEU on this subject of adoption, foster care, and, in particular, for aging-out young people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I appreciate the eloquent statement our colleague from Iowa has put into the RECORD and his passionate advocacy on behalf of this special group of children in America. From his position as senior member on the Finance Committee, both serving as chair and as ranking member, his support has been essential to their well-being. In a committee that has a lot of important issues, from tax reform to international trade, the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY, never fails to keep the needs of foster care children and their families and the support community on the front of that agenda. I could not have a better partner, and I am very grateful for his partnership on this issue and his friendship.

I also want to recognize some of our colleagues from the House: Representative KAREN BASS, Representative TOM MARINO, Representative MICHELE BACHMAN, and Representative JIM MCDERMOTT, who worked very closely with Senator GRASSLEY and myself. As you can see, this is across party lines, across geographic lines, and across different political philosophies.

We want to say one thing very loud and clear to the country: Foster children are not criminals. They are not delinquents. They are children who are in desperate need of love and care and support. Our foster care system in many ways works beautifully and in some ways needs, of course, to be fixed, repaired, and strengthened. But overall the foster care system should, at all times, be temporary. It is a temporary place for children to go to be protected and healed and nurtured until they can be returned to their birth family or to their extended family with sibling groups intact or until they can be processed to a kinship adoption, which Senator GRASSLEY has been a tremendous advocate for, or to a domestic adoption.

I cannot add anything to the very excellent and comprehensive statement the Senator made. I would like to add just a few points. Because of the work many of us have done—and we do not hear good news around here that often, so I want to share that in the last 20 years, because of the work that our group has done, and others in the Congress, we have doubled the amount of children being adopted out of the foster care system. That is a tremendous victory because of the legislation that has been passed, the focus across party lines.

In 1990 we only adopted 14,000 children out of foster care. In the last year of record, 2010, we adopted 53,000. It is a tripling of adoptions out of foster care.

I do not have the numbers in front of me for reunifications, but Senator GRASSLEY and I know that number has increased as well. We are making progress in the bills we are proposing and passing, the appropriations that we are investing. It has not been a lot more money over the last few years. It

has just been a real strategic focus which I would like to believe our caucus and the adoption caucus as well, the foster care caucus, has helped to produce.

We have had more adoptions out of foster care. We have had more reunifications out of foster care. We have shortened the time that children are in foster care. But we have, and in this month of May still have, many challenges. That is why Senator GRASSLEY and I urge our colleagues to join us in this resolution, S. Res. 462. Be a cosponsor. Step up and say by your cosponsorship that you care about this issue, that you want to help us continue to make progress.

I want to remember our former colleague, John Chafee, who, when he was in the Senate, was an extraordinary advocate for foster care children. We named the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program in his honor. As Senator GRASSLEY said, we are making progress with helping our children who age out when we failed to reunite them with their birth family, we failed to find them an adoptive home. They are aging out, but we are trying to give them more help and support. That is still a challenge.

Some of our Members are working on foster children and school choice. If children are brought into the foster care system and they are separated from their families, it is quite traumatic. Of course it is for their own good. Sometimes their families are being abusive. Sometimes their families are being grossly negligent. Unfortunately, in this day and age sometimes their families are deported and they are in the home alone. We want to make sure the children get to stay at least in the school of their choice. It is one thing to be pulled from your family; it is another thing to have to lose your family 1 day and your school the next day and all of your teachers, all of your friends.

There is legislation pending that would give foster children the opportunity to stay in the school they are in when they enter care, if that is their choice. That would be a great reform.

We also want to continue to promote kinship adoption, reaching out to the extended family, trying to keep children placed in their extended families who are willing and responsible to raise them—but not placing children with kin if the kin or the relatives are not responsible and not willing; that is not a solution.

Finally, we want to promote quality foster families. This is a problem that is easily solvable. It seems like it is a lot, this number, 450-some-odd thousand children. But it represents only one-half of 1 percent of all children in America. This is not a big number. It sounds like it when we say 450,000, but the percentage, one-half of 1 percent—we calculated it 1 day on just the back of a napkin. If one family for every four churches in America would say yes to taking in a foster child or to adopt a child out of foster care, there would be no more orphans in our country.

Again, if one family out of every four churches stepped up for the children available for adoption, we would have no more orphans in America. Then we could focus on recruiting quality foster families who can help these children to find their way—to find their way back to their biological families with their sibling groups intact or find their way to a new family who will love them and nurture them and protect them and support them forever.

That is what families do. We do not support our children until they are 18 and let them go on their merry way. We are with them until the last breath. That is what parents do. We are with our children forever. Every child in this world deserves a forever family.

Senator GRASSLEY and I have come together. We work to strengthen our foster care system. We know it is broken in places. We know it can be fixed. We work on fixing it every day.

I thank our colleagues who have joined us in just recognizing Foster Care Month. As Senator GRASSLEY said in his conclusion, and I will say in mine, we want to thank everyone who helps on this every month of the year, not just May. We want to thank the teachers who reach out especially to the foster children they know are in their classrooms. We want to thank the judges who process their cases quickly.

I particularly want to thank the CASA workers. I am a big believer in CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates. I think it is a great organization for all the volunteers who worked to help make our foster care system in America better.

Again, this is S. Res. 462.

I would like to thank our counterparts in the House.

It has been a real joy and pleasure to work with Senator GRASSLEY these many years on helping to promote the very best practices in the country on reforming our foster care system in America and trying to help who we can around the world.

SENATE RESOLUTION 463—DESIGNATING MAY 19, 2012, AS ''NATIONAL KIDS TO PARKS DAY''

Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Mr. BINGAMAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 463

Whereas the second annual National Kids to Parks Day will be celebrated on May 19, 2012;

Whereas the goal of National Kids to Parks Day is to empower young people and encourage families to get outdoors and visit the parks of the United States;

Whereas, on National Kids to Parks Day, individuals from rural and urban areas of the United States can be reintroduced to the splendid National Parks and State and neighborhood parks that are located in their communities;

Whereas communities across the United States offer a variety of natural resources and public land, often with free access, to individuals seeking outdoor recreation;

Whereas the people of the United States should encourage young people to lead a more active lifestyle, as too many young people in the United States are overweight or obese;

Whereas National Kids to Parks Day is an opportunity for families to take a break from their busy lives and come together for a day of wholesome fun; and

Whereas National Kids to Parks Day aims to broaden the appreciation of young people for nature and the outdoors: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates May 19, 2012, as ''National Kids to Parks Day'';

(2) recognizes the importance of outdoor recreation and the preservation of open spaces to the health of the young people of the United States; and

(3) calls on the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 464—COMMEMORATING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota (for himself and Mr. THUNE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 464

Whereas on January 2, 1942, the War Department established Rapid City Army Air Base in South Dakota as a training location for B–17 Flying Fortress crews;

Whereas thousands of pilots, navigators, radio operators, and gunners were trained at Rapid City Army Air Base and went on to support the allied efforts in World War II;

Whereas on June 13, 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower visited the base and dedicated it in memory of Brigadier General Richard E. Ellsworth;

Whereas during the Cold War, Ellsworth Air Force Base maintained 2 legs of the strategic triad, strategic bombardment, and intercontinental ballistic missiles, earning the title ''The Showplace of Strategic Air Command'';

Whereas 2012 marks the 25th year of the B–1B Lancer mission at Ellsworth Air Force Base;

Whereas in 1999, B–1Bs from Ellsworth Air Force Base flew over 100 combat missions in support of NATO forces in Operation Allied Force in Kosovo;

Whereas Ellsworth Air Force Base has played a crucial role in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and Operation Enduring Freedom, deploying over 10,000 personnel and flying over 6,000 combat sorties in those operations;

Whereas the first ever B–1B global strike mission launched from the United States came from Ellsworth Air Force Base on March 30, 2011, striking targets in Libya before refueling, rearming, and hitting additional targets in Libya on the return;

Whereas, for 70 years, Ellsworth Air Force Base has served as an integral part of the defense strategy of the United States and served as the proud home to thousands of bomber pilots, navigators, radio operators, gunners, missile launch control facility personnel, and aircraft and missile maintenance personnel;

Whereas, the personnel from Ellsworth Air Force Base have a history of compiling some

of the highest marks in competitive readiness and maintenance exercises and competitions;

Whereas, for the past 65 years, Ellsworth Air Force Base has—

(1) been home to the 28th Bomb Wing and some of the most impressive aircraft in the United States, including the B–17 Flying Fortress, the B–29 Superfortress, the RB–36 Peacemaker, the B–52 Stratofortress, the KC–135 Stratotanker, KC–97 Stratofreighter and the B–1B Lancer; and

(2) for parts of 4 decades, served as an important cog in the missile defense system of the United States, featuring the Titan and Minuteman missile systems;

Whereas Ellsworth Air Force Base continues to evolve and is preparing to welcome the MQ–9 Reaper mission later in 2012; and

Whereas, Ellsworth Air Force Base and the communities of Rapid City and Box Elder, South Dakota have and will continue to enjoy a long standing, mutually beneficial relationship: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the contributions of Ellsworth Air Force Base to the security of the United States;

(2) commemorates 70 years of excellence and service by Ellsworth Air Force Base to the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to recognize and honor the dedicated and exemplary service of the airmen and their families, past and present, stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base.

SENATE RESOLUTION 465—RECOGNIZING THAT THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF COLORADO HAS PROCLAIMED 2012 AS THE ''YEAR OF WATER''

Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 465

Whereas water is a precious and limited natural resource;

Whereas a clean and sustainable water supply is essential to the high quality of life enjoyed by Coloradans;

Whereas a clean and sustainable water supply is essential to the success of all aspects of the economy of the State of Colorado, including the agricultural, municipal, industrial, and recreational economies;

Whereas as a headwaters State, the health of the water in the State of Colorado has a direct impact on neighboring States;

Whereas the population of the State of Colorado is predicted to double by 2050;

Whereas educating the public about limited water resources will be critical in meeting the increasing demands placed on water in the future;

Whereas 2012 marks the—

(1) 100th anniversary of the construction of the Rio Grande Reservoir;

(2) 90th anniversary of the Colorado River Compact of 1922;

(3) 75th anniversary of the creation of the Colorado Water Conservation Board;

(4) 75th anniversary of the creation of the Colorado River Water Conservation District;

(5) 75th anniversary of the creation of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and the Colorado-Big Thompson Project;

(6) 50th anniversary of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, administered by the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District;

(7) 10th anniversary of the Colorado Foundation for Water Education; and

(8) 10th anniversary of the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District; and

Whereas the Governor of the State of Colorado has proclaimed 2012 as the ''Year of Water'' in the State of Colorado: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes that the Governor of the State of Colorado has proclaimed 2012 as the ''Year of Water'' in the State of Colorado.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 16, 2012, at 2:30 p.m. in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a hearing entitled, ''Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 16, 2012, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Identifying Opportunities for Health Care Delivery System Reform: Lessons from the Front Line'' on May 16, 2012, at 10 a.m. in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 16, 2012, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on May 16, 2012, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Children's Health and Environmental Responsibility of the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 16, 2012, at 10 a.m. in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Growing Long-Term Value: Corporate Environmental Responsibility and Innovation.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Chantel Boyens, a detailee to the Budget Committee, be given floor privileges for the pendency of the debate on the budget resolutions and S. 2516, the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Laura Sands and Katrine Lazar of my staff be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's proceedings.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 17, 2012, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar Nos. 646 and 647; that there be 90 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form to run concurrently on both nominations en bloc; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that the nominations be subject to a 60-vote threshold; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session; further, that the cloture votes with respect to these nominations be vitiated.

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

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration en bloc of the following resolutions which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 463, S. Res. 464, and S. Res. 465.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senate will proceed to consider the resolutions en bloc.

S. RES. 463

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I rise today in support of a pretty common sense goal—getting more kids outside and engaged in the great outdoors.

In America today, I am sad to say that one in three children are overweight or obese. Kids between the ages of 8 and 18 spend an average of 7 and a half hours a day using some sort of entertainment media such as TVs, computers, video games, cell phones and movies. I believe this is a major reason why only ⅓ of all children get the recommended level of physical activity every day, contributing to high obesity rates.

The grave effects of childhood obesity on our children's quality of life are troubling, and the impacts on our economy distressing. But the effect on our national security is equally alarming. With current obesity rates, I have serious concerns that our military will have difficulty finding soldiers physically qualified to serve in the near future.

A healthier Nation is a stronger Nation, and encouraging greater physical activity in America's youth by getting more kids outdoors will help stop this disturbing trend.

That is why I am proud to submit a bipartisan resolution today which recognizes May 19, 2012, as the second annual National Kids to Parks Day. I led this effort last year, and was extremely pleased to see the many thousands of families that made it out to a national, State, or local park to enjoy the great outdoors.

So far, over 70,000 people across the country have signed the pledge to get outside on National Kids to Parks Day.

Enjoying the outdoors has been a lifelong passion for me. Growing up in the American southwest, my parents would take our family on frequent trips to the nearby parks and helped inspire me to become a mountain guide with Outward Bound. At Outward Bound I developed a strong love not just for being outdoors, but for sharing the outdoors with others.

In Congress, I have similarly tried to ensure that open spaces in both urban and rural areas are preserved so that families in Colorado and across America have ample opportunity to get out and take advantage of our greatest natural resources, our parks, and open spaces.

Preserving open spaces is critical to our ability to enjoy the outdoors, which is essential not just to public health but to our economy as well. In Colorado, a big part of our economy is dependent on having open spaces—from skiing to whitewater rafting, hiking, and mountain biking—protecting land for outdoor recreation keeps us and our economy healthy.

In this same spirit, on Saturday families all across the Nation will get outside to celebrate National Kids to Parks Day and America's commitment to getting kids outdoors.

Getting kids outdoors won't completely solve our childhood obesity problem, but it may help them get excited about being active and healthy outdoors. It may help inspire the next generation of American stewards to enjoy and protect our Nation's special places.

I would like to thank Senator BINGAMAN, Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator PORTMAN for joining me in submitting this resolution.

I would like to close by asking my colleagues to support my National Kids to Parks Day resolution.

S. RES. 464

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, today I wish to mark the 70th anniversary of Ellsworth Air Force Base. For the past seven decades, my home State of South Dakota has had the distinct honor of being home to Ellsworth Air Force Base. This weekend, I will gather in Rapid City with Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz, 28th Bomb Wing Commander Colonel Mark Weatherington, Governor Dennis Daugaard, Senator JOHN THUNE, Congresswoman KRISTI NOEM, past and present Airmen, and proud South Dakotans to celebrate this anniversary.

A lot has changed since the Rapid City Army Air Base opened in 1942. At the time, the base served as a training location for B–17 Flying Fortress crews and thousands of pilots, navigators, radio operators, and gunners trained there during World War II. Over the years, the base has adapted and grown to support new missions but a reminder of its early days remains in the PRIDE hangar. This historic building was completed in 1949 to house the RB–36 Peacemakers and later was home to the 44th Strategic Missile Wing and the 77th Bomb Squadron.

The 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth Air Force Base has been home to such impressive aircraft as the B–17 Flying Fortress, B–29 Superfortress, the RB–36 Peacemaker, the B–52 Stratofortress, and, for the past 25 years, the B–1B Lancer. All these planes have graced the skies of western South Dakota, offering South Dakotans a visual and audial reminder of the power of the United States Air Force. Ellsworth has played an important role in every major conflict since World War II, including flying over 6,000 combat sorties in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and Operation Enduring Freedom. On March 20, 2011, history was made as the first ever B–1B combat sorties launched directly from the United States to strike targets overseas were launched at Ellsworth and hit targets in Libya. Ellsworth continues to evolve and as we reflect on the past, we also look to a bright future for the base, including the arrival later this year of the MQ–9 Reaper mission.

Ellsworth Air Force Base is the largest employer in western South Dakota and has had a significant economic impact on our State. The impact of the base on our State goes beyond the economic, however; the base and its personnel are a part of the fabric of our state. Rapid City, Box Elder, and communities throughout the Black Hills have enjoyed a friendly and mutually beneficial relationship with the base. This is something that, unfortunately, cannot be said at every military installation. This symbiotic relationship has displayed itself in numerous ways, such as in 1972 when base personnel assisted in the recovery and relief efforts when historic flooding struck Rapid City. When snowstorms crippled the region in 1949 and 1950, Ellsworth personnel airlifted food and hay bales to stranded ranchers and livestock. Today, personnel from Ellsworth contribute to many charitable efforts in the community, such as helping with the United Way's annual Day of Caring and the Children's Miracle Network.

As I reflect on this anniversary, I'm reminded of all of the dedicated Airmen, past and present, that have served at Ellsworth Air Force Base. The Air Force is only as strong as its members, and Ellsworth has seen many talented, patriotic individuals over the past 70 years. Many former Wing Commanders have gone on to serve in top positions in the Air Force, including as commanders of U.S. Transportation Command, Air Education and Training Command, and Air Force Global Strike Command.

Mr. President, for the past 70 years Ellsworth Air Force Base has made significant contributions to the State of South Dakota and the security of the United States. I commend Ellsworth Air Force Base on this occasion and know that the base, and the brave men and women who serve there, will continue to make invaluable contributions for decades to come.

S. RES. 465

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, today I am submitting a resolution concerning water in the State of Colorado. This resolution recognizes the importance of water to the State of Colorado and the contributions of many of the organizations that have innovated and cooperated over the past century to develop, protect and conserve this scarce resource. I want to thank my colleague from Colorado Senator BENNET for cosponsoring the resolution.

In the arid West, water is our most precious natural resource. It is woven into our history as a source of life, a source of recreation and even economic growth. But as a limited resource, it is also a source of conflict. As the old saying in the West goes, whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting.

However, I rise today to highlight not our disagreements but our cooperation. Generations of Coloradans have joined together and worked hard to solve Colorado's water challenges, because a resource as valuable as water must ultimately unite us.

The year 2012 is a particularly significant year for water in Colorado, as it marks numerous anniversaries that have had an enormous impact on how water is managed in my state.

It is the 100th anniversary of the construction of the Rio Grande Reservoir, 90th anniversary of the Colorado River Compact of 1922, 75th anniversary of

the creation of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, 75th anniversary of the creation of the Colorado River Water Conservation District, 75th anniversary of the creation of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, 50th anniversary of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, 10th anniversary of the Colorado Foundation for Water Education and 10th anniversary of the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District.

In fact, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper has designated 2012 as the Year of Water in Colorado.

I am proud of efforts underway in the state to raise awareness about the importance of water. For example, a statewide celebration named Colorado Water 2012 will help to engage and educate Coloradans about past achievements and highlight the challenges we face in the future management of water. Colorado Water 2012 will continue throughout the year, and I look forward to participating in the education and engagement of our citizens.

I hope that this resolution can in some small way add to the appreciation of water issues in the United States Senate and to efforts underway in Colorado.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the resolutions be printed in the RECORD at the appropriate place as if read.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

The resolutions, with their preambles, read as follows:

S. RES. 463

(Designating May 19, 2012, as ''National Kids to Parks Day'')

Whereas the second annual National Kids to Parks Day will be celebrated on May 19, 2012;

Whereas the goal of National Kids to Parks Day is to empower young people and encourage families to get outdoors and visit the parks of the United States;

Whereas, on National Kids to Parks Day, individuals from rural and urban areas of the United States can be reintroduced to the splendid National Parks and State and neighborhood parks that are located in their communities;

Whereas communities across the United States offer a variety of natural resources and public land, often with free access, to individuals seeking outdoor recreation;

Whereas the people of the United States should encourage young people to lead a more active lifestyle, as too many young people in the United States are overweight or obese;

Whereas National Kids to Parks Day is an opportunity for families to take a break from their busy lives and come together for a day of wholesome fun; and

Whereas National Kids to Parks Day aims to broaden the appreciation of young people for nature and the outdoors: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates May 19, 2012, as ''National Kids to Parks Day'';

(2) recognizes the importance of outdoor recreation and the preservation of open spaces to the health of the young people of the United States; and

(3) calls on the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

S. RES. 464

(Commemorating the 70th anniversary of Ellsworth Air Force Base)

Whereas on January 2, 1942, the War Department established Rapid City Army Air Base in South Dakota as a training location for B–17 Flying Fortress crews;

Whereas thousands of pilots, navigators, radio operators, and gunners were trained at Rapid City Army Air Base and went on to support the allied efforts in World War II;

Whereas on June 13, 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower visited the base and dedicated it in memory of Brigadier General Richard E. Ellsworth;

Whereas during the Cold War, Ellsworth Air Force Base maintained 2 legs of the strategic triad, strategic bombardment, and intercontinental ballistic missiles, earning the title ''The Showplace of Strategic Air Command'';

Whereas 2012 marks the 25th year of the B–1B Lancer mission at Ellsworth Air Force Base;

Whereas in 1999, B–1Bs from Ellsworth Air Force Base flew over 100 combat missions in support of NATO forces in Operation Allied Force in Kosovo;

Whereas Ellsworth Air Force Base has played a crucial role in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and Operation Enduring Freedom, deploying over 10,000 personnel and flying over 6,000 combat sorties in those operations;

Whereas the first ever B–1B global strike mission launched from the United States came from Ellsworth Air Force Base on March 30, 2011, striking targets in Libya before refueling, rearming, and hitting additional targets in Libya on the return;

Whereas, for 70 years, Ellsworth Air Force Base has served as an integral part of the defense strategy of the United States and served as the proud home to thousands of bomber pilots, navigators, radio operators, gunners, missile launch control facility personnel, and aircraft and missile maintenance personnel;

Whereas, the personnel from Ellsworth Air Force Base have a history of compiling some of the highest marks in competitive readiness and maintenance exercises and competitions;

Whereas, for the past 65 years, Ellsworth Air Force Base has—

(1) been home to the 28th Bomb Wing and some of the most impressive aircraft in the United States, including the B–17 Flying Fortress, the B–29 Superfortress, the RB–36 Peacemaker, the B–52 Stratofortress, the KC–135 Stratotanker, KC–97 Stratofreighter and the B–1B Lancer; and

(2) for parts of 4 decades, served as an important cog in the missile defense system of the United States, featuring the Titan and Minuteman missile systems;

Whereas Ellsworth Air Force Base continues to evolve and is preparing to welcome the MQ–9 Reaper mission later in 2012; and

Whereas, Ellsworth Air Force Base and the communities of Rapid City and Box Elder, South Dakota have and will continue to enjoy a long standing, mutually beneficial relationship: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the contributions of Ellsworth Air Force Base to the security of the United States;

(2) commemorates 70 years of excellence and service by Ellsworth Air Force Base to the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to recognize and honor the dedicated and exemplary service of the airmen and their families, past and present, stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base.

S. RES. 465

(Recognizing that the Governor of the State of Colorado has proclaimed 2012 as the ''Year of Water'')

Whereas water is a precious and limited natural resource;

Whereas a clean and sustainable water supply is essential to the high quality of life enjoyed by Coloradans;

Whereas a clean and sustainable water supply is essential to the success of all aspects of the economy of the State of Colorado, including the agricultural, municipal, industrial, and recreational economies;

Whereas as a headwaters State, the health of the water in the State of Colorado has a direct impact on neighboring States;

Whereas the population of the State of Colorado is predicted to double by 2050;

Whereas educating the public about limited water resources will be critical in meeting the increasing demands placed on water in the future;

Whereas 2012 marks the—

(1) 100th anniversary of the construction of the Rio Grande Reservoir;

(2) 90th anniversary of the Colorado River Compact of 1922;

(3) 75th anniversary of the creation of the Colorado Water Conservation Board;

(4) 75th anniversary of the creation of the Colorado River Water Conservation District;

(5) 75th anniversary of the creation of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and the Colorado-Big Thompson Project;

(6) 50th anniversary of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, administered by the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District;

(7) 10th anniversary of the Colorado Foundation for Water Education; and

(8) 10th anniversary of the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District; and

Whereas the Governor of the State of Colorado has proclaimed 2012 as the ''Year of Water'' in the State of Colorado: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes that the Governor of the State of Colorado has proclaimed 2012 as the ''Year of Water'' in the State of Colorado.

DISCHARGE AND REFERRAL—H.R. 2947

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that H.R. 2947 be discharged from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and be referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2012

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 17; that following the prayer and the

pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed to have expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and that the majority leader be recognized.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, it is the majority leader's intention to begin consideration of the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 400, S. 3187, the FDA user fee bill, and equally divide the time until 10:30 a.m., with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the second half.

At 10:30 a.m., the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the Stein and Powell nominations, both nominees to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. At noon, there will be two votes on confirmation of the nominations.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:56 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 17, 2012, at 9:30 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS TO PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU

HON. TIM SCOTT

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate President Ma Ying-jeou of the Republic of China (Taiwan) on his inauguration on May 20th, 2012.

The Republic of China (Taiwan) is the first nation in the ethnic Chinese world where democracy has taken root. Today Taiwan celebrates freedom and democracy. We hope China will one day transform itself into a democratic and free country based on the example set by Taiwan.

For the past four years, under the leadership of President Ma, the relationship between Taiwan and China has improved dramatically, with increased economic and cultural exchanges as well as reduced military tension across the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan and the United States have always had a strong partnership, built on cooperation, trust and shared values. In 1979 the U.S. Congress enacted the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), the cornerstone of our bilateral relationship. While the U.S. and Taiwan do not have formal ties, relations between the two sides have continued to strengthen. For instance, the support of the U.S. Congress for Taiwan has never faltered. We trust that the relations will grow in areas including trade, science and technology, educational exchange, military sales based on the Taiwan Relations Act.

On the occasion of Mr. Ma's second inaugural, we celebrate with him and his people by affirming our appreciation for their successes and by expressing our continued commitment to Taiwan's security and well being.

CONGRATULATING TAIWAN PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU ON HIS SECOND PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

HON. BLAKE FARENTHOLD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate President Ma Ying-jeou on his second presidential inauguration. The United States of America is proud of its relationship with Taiwan, originally created by the Taiwan Relations Act, which gives the United States an important legal commitment to their country's vibrant democracy.

Taiwan has made remarkable progress in so many ways. It is now one of the world's 20 freest economies. Their strong commitment to structural reform and openness to global commerce have enabled it to become a global leader in economic freedom.

Democracy is hard to come by as witnessed by the turmoil in the Middle East. To maintain a democracy in these troubled times is no mere accomplishment. Taiwan, led by President Ma Ying-jeou, has achieved a democracy unrivaled. His efforts to bring peace to the region have been both courageous and meaningful.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating President Ma Ying-jeou and I wish him well in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF ROBERT N. CAMPBELL III, VICE CHAIRMAN OF DELOITTE & TOUCHE USA LLP

HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the retirement of Robert N. Campbell III, Vice Chairman of Deloitte & Touche USA LLP and National Sector Leader of Deloitte's U.S. State Government practice. Bob will soon retire after 39 years with Deloitte.

During his tenure with Deloitte, Bob has worked closely with government leaders to address and resolve their critical policy, financing, and operational issues. He has advised leaders of major federal agencies, over 40 states and several major local governments on a variety of issues spanning human services, higher education, K–12 education, student loan finance, employment, economic development, public health care, Medicaid, mental health, developmental disabilities, revenue and taxation, and central finance and administration.

Mr. Campbell is a frequent writer and speaker on public policy and management issues. He recently co-authored the book States of Transition addressing the big issues currently facing our nation's governors. In recent years he has been quoted in Washington Technology, Federal Times, Government Technology, Consulting Magazine, Computer World, The Hill, USA Today, and other leading publications. He has also addressed a number of conferences and associations including the National Association of Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers, the Council of State Governments, and Governing Magazine's Government Performance Conference.

During his tenure at Deloitte, Bob has held a variety of senior leadership roles and was awarded the firm's annual Curtis Award for Partnership Values.

Bob received a Bachelor's degree with honors majoring in business and history from Austin College in 1971 and a Master's Degree from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas in 1973. He has served on various community boards and committees and is presently a member of the Advisory Board of the LBJ School of Public Affairs and on the Chancellors Council Executive Committee of the University of Texas System.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, Bob Campbell has demonstrated passion and excellence in helping governments address and resolve critical policy, financing, and operational issues. His insights have helped governments across the country achieve better results for the citizens they serve.

On behalf of the people of the 10th Congressional District, I would like to thank Bob for his years of service and wish him continued success in the years to come.

IN HONOR OF FRANCISCO ''FRANK'' ALVAREZ

HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of my dear friend, Mr. Francisco ''Frank'' Alvarez. He passed suddenly this week and his passing is a devastating loss to our entire community. Frank served as the Deputy District Attorney for the Stanislaus County District Attorney's office.

Frank was born July 13, 1954, in East Los Angeles. Mr. Alvarez served four years in the Air Force as a teletype repairman before starting his law career. He began working at the District Attorney's office in 1990. He prosecuted a number of misdemeanor and felony crimes from domestic violence to consumer fraud. Frank secured the first conviction against a gang member who violated the south Modesto gang injunction as a prosecutor for the gang unit; however, he spent the better part of his career—10 years—in the juvenile division.

''While he always made sure the young people were accountable for their actions, he was also very much focused on rehabilitation,'' said Ruben Villalobos, a defense attorney and a friend of Mr. Alvarez's. ''There are a lot of young people who moved beyond their criminal behavior because of Frank.''

In addition to his work at the District Attorney's office, Frank Alvarez served the community both as an advocate and also as the Commander of the American GI Forum. As a veteran, Frank knew how important service to our nation is. His life was an example to others. He was selfless and never hesitated to help a young person realize their goals and strive for success. Frank was known throughout our community for his outstanding community service.

He has also served on a number of boards and committees, including the Girl Scouts, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors Mental Health Board and the Turlock Unified School District Criminal Justice Committee. Since 1992, he participated in the Stanislaus County Mock Trial competition and has helped organize the Fourth of July parade, Veterans Day parade and Cinco de Mayo parade.

He recently was appointed as a member on the California Mexican-American War Memorial and was the commander of the American

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

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

GI Forum. The organization raises money for scholarships for veterans and future military, but Mr. Alvarez and another member had the idea of starting a scholarship for teachers to help augment the money they pay out of pocket for classroom costs.

"He was a district attorney, but he was real down to earth," said Fred Garcia, an American GI Forum vice commander. "He never was assuming. He could deal with people from all walks of life, from homeless people to dignitaries."

Mr. Alvarez is survived by his wife, Sandra; daughter, Tanya; brothers Carlos, Alex and Luis; and sister, Sylvia, as well as nine nieces and nephews.

Please join me in honoring the life of Frank Alvarez and his dedication to our nation and community. He will be missed by all of us as we look to comfort his family during this difficult time.

CONGRATULATING PRESIDENT MA AND THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, on May 20, 2012 the Honorable Ma Ying-jeou will be sworn in for a second term as President of the Republic of Taiwan. President Ma has already served four years as president and his tireless dedication to public service has been rewarded by the people of Taiwan with a well-deserved reelection this January.

During President Ma's first term, Taiwan has been accepted as an Observer in the World Health Organization, reduced tensions with the People's Republic of China, and crafted 16 trade agreements. I rise to congratulate President Ma on his election and the people of Taiwan for their decades of dedication to democracy and freedom.

As demonstrated over the decades, the United States of America and Taiwan enjoy a close and strong relationship based on shared democratic values and free market economies. Today, Taiwan remains a major trading partner and friend.

Our strong economic and cultural ties go back nearly a hundred years. I know this strong bond will continue for another 100 years, and, under President Ma's leadership, thrive in the immediate future.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus on Taiwan, I offer my sincere congratulations to President Ma and the people of Taiwan and look forward to our continued cooperation.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTING IRAN FROM ACQUIRING A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, Iran's failure to comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions regarding its nuclear program, or its responsibilities as a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, are deeply troubling.

A nuclear-armed Iran would represent a grave threat to the interests of the United States, Israel, and our other allies in the Middle East. This body has forcefully and repeatedly emphasized the singular importance of contributing to Israel's defense and well-being, most recently only last week when we overwhelmingly passed H.R. 4133, affirming the strategic relationship between Israel and the United States.

Sadly, the resolution before us does not contribute in any appreciable way either to Israel's security or to the goal of compelling Iran's cooperation on their nuclear program. The ambiguous language of H. Res. 568 effectively redefines the circumstances that could be used to justify a military strike against Iran. This could make it harder to reach an agreement through negotiations, since it could be argued that Iran—and indeed any country with a civilian nuclear program—already possesses "nuclear weapons capability." The consensus in the U.S. and Israeli intelligence community remains that Iran has not made the decision to move ahead with the development of a nuclear weapon.

Furthermore, the resolution declares that, of all possible responses should Iran make that decision, our government cannot consider containment. By combining these two provisions, even in a non-binding resolution, the Congress risks accelerating a drive to war.

Since President Obama took office, the United States has carefully built a comprehensive regime of multi-lateral sanctions in response to Iran's intransigence. After extensive diplomatic efforts by this administration, Iran agreed to reengage with the international community, and the second major negotiations session will take place in Baghdad on May 23.

The United States and our partners enter the dialogue with Iran from a position of strength and unity, while reports indicate Iran's leadership is divided and weak. With the P5+1 negotiations, we have a unique opportunity to demonstrate our resolve to achieve the goal of full compliance by Iran with IAEA expectations, while reversing the clock on Iran's nuclear efforts and building toward a permanent agreement that ensures Iran will never develop a nuclear weapon.

The United States built a global alliance against Iran with the support of close, like-minded allies Britain, Germany and France. But our efforts also rely heavily on Russia and China, partners that have at times seen this issue very differently. It is critical that we maintain a consistent and reasoned approach towards Iran that will help us maintain this network of partners.

As we wind down two wars in the region, it is urgent that we make the most of our extensive diplomatic efforts and the platform of stringent sanctions the world community has imposed on Iran. We must capitalize on the opportunity presented by the Baghdad talks. This resolution is inconsistent with that aim.

HONORING RIMA PATEL

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great Nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Rima Patel is a junior at Dawson High School in Brazoria County, Texas. Her essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

The government is a colossal term which is defined in a variety of ways by different people in different places. Government means a multitude of things depending on country, region, and geography. Many people are shut out in the darkness by their government and have to struggle to learn even the basics truths of life because their government is so secretive. Living in a democratic country, I believe that since the idea of democracy was conceived in the western hemisphere, the ultimate goals of the government should be: to serve as a guardian, to be a force that leads people, and to always highlight the people before itself. I also believe that government's responsibility comes directly from the people because they are the ones who vote and put trust into the people who will be leading them. However it seems in this day and age that people often times do not make decisions based on issues that they believe in but more so on the public image the candidates display. Slowly it seems as if the democratic ideals of our nation are shattering, the public who should be the true force behind the government, is fading away into the distant background. I believe it is the government's job to not let their power grow unchecked and restore the people with the power that belongs to them. We've often heard the term that those who serve in the government are public servants meaning they are there to uphold the people and assist them with their needs. Therefore the government needs to aid people in obtaining a secure life and perhaps giving people a path to go down. The people in the government are the leaders that people look up to so that means they need to be uncorrupt, trustworthy, and above all dedicated to the people. It is this that people look for in the government someone who fosters development and expands the nation in the most positive way. The government should not barge into people's life and try to control people who have different ideas but should instead spark enthusiasm for the people to be ideal citizens. Its seems that in a decade where TVs and computers are so prominent, that the government has simply forgotten to keep the public educated at every step. It is not the job of the government to protect people from the truth but instead it is their job to help guide the people through the truth. The government should not conform the masses of people but instead take into account the different beliefs, and create a unity. It is my vision, hope, and belief that one day the government shall be the upmost example of

unity and truly uphold the people. It will truly be the strength behind the people and see the people reflected within it. The government in essence should be ''for the people, by the people,'' forever and always.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 252, due to other representational obligations in Hannibal, Missouri, I had to miss this vote.

Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

ARMENIAN REMEMBRANCE DAY

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 97th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. Today, I remember the one-and-a-half million Armenians that endured unspeakable suffering and loss at the hand of the Ottoman Empire during the first World War.

Only with a thorough examination of history and open acknowledgement of the past will the plight of the Armenians be fully understood. As my colleagues know, last month was Genocide Awareness month. In addition to the genocide of Armenians, the 20th century bore witness to the loss of 6 million Jews and 400,000 other persons deemed ''non-desirable'' by the Nazis, and the modern-day horrors in Cambodia and Rwanda. All too often, we have not learned from past genocides.

As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states ''No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'' and that ''Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.'' Though nothing changes the fact that mass killings and unspeakable acts of brutality occurred, today I wish to learn from the past to better bring about hope for a brighter, more peaceful future and reconciliation of the people of Armenia and Turkey.

HONORING ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Asian-Pacific American community on the 20th anniversary of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month.

The achievements and successes of Asian-Pacific Americans demonstrate, above all, that the greatness of our Nation lies in its diversity. And no other community in the U.S. represents the diversity of our great Nation more than the Asian-Pacific American community.

An inherently diverse population, Asian-Pacific Americans comprise over 45 distinct ethnicities and over 100 language dialects. Now numbering 18.5 million people, the Asian-Pacific American community grew 46 percent in the past decade—more than any other major racial group.

The Pacific Islander population, while significantly smaller in comparison to the overall APA population, has also grown at a rapid rate over the past decade. According to the 2010 Census, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, NHPI, population grew to over 1.2 million, an increase of 40 percent over the past decade.

The NHPI population in the U.S. traces their roots to several island cultures in the Pacific. They include Native Hawaiians, Samoans, Tahitians, Tongans, and Tokelauans; Chamorros, Marshallese, Palauans, Chuukese, Mariana Islanders, Saipanese, Carolinians, Kosraeans, Pohnpeians, Yapese, and the people of Kiribati; as well Fijians, Solomon Islanders, Papua New Guineans, and the people of Vanuatu—all who have made their home in this great Nation.

Pacific Islander heritage runs deep in NHPI communities across the Nation and the ancient cultural values of service to the family and the village carry on in NHPI's service to our Nation. In any arena of society in which Pacific Islanders have attained success, one common thread we see is their unending devotion to giving back to the community.

Just last Friday, I had the honor of speaking at the funeral of a beloved son of Samoa and NFL Great, Junior Seau, who not only shined on the football field but who also devoted much of his time off the field to helping underprivileged youth through the Junior Seau Foundation.

I was fortunate enough to have been able to meet Junior and one memorable occasion was right here in the Nation's capital. In 2005, I had the privilege of attending an award ceremony at the White House to witness President George W. Bush present to Junior the distinguished President's Volunteer Service Award for his work in helping youth through the Junior Seau Foundation. I remember Junior's genuinely humble spirit evident of his continuous connection to his roots and humble beginnings.

And many others follow in these steps. Even stars such as Dwayne ''The Rock'' Johnson, who by the way was recently awarded ''Action Star of the Year'' at the prestigious CinemaCon Awards Ceremony, are heavily invested in enriching the lives of those less fortunate.

Pacific Islanders also have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defending the freedoms of our Nation. As a Vietnam veteran, I would be remiss if I do not say something to honor and respect the hundreds of thousands of Asian-Pacific Americans who serve and have served in our armed forces.

In closing, as we celebrate Asian-Pacific Heritage Month this May, let us also honor our Asian-Pacific Americans who display the virtue of servanthood in every arena of society, and especially those who have dedicated their lives to serving our Nation in the U.S. Armed Forces, including those from my district of American Samoa. Let us pay tribute to their sacrifice as we celebrate our heritage and freedoms.

EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR.

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, due to mechanical problems on my flight en route to Washington, DC from Lafayette, Louisiana, I was unable to return in time for votes on the day of May 15, 2012. Had I been present to vote, my voting record would reflect the following: H.R. 365—''yea;'' H.R. 3874—''yea;'' H.R. 205—''yea.''

IN REMEMBRANCE OF CAPTAIN THOMAS GRAMITH, USAF

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Captain Thomas Gramith of the 336th Fighter Squadron, Seymour Air Force Base, United States Air Force.

Captain Gramith died in an F–15E crash while providing air support to ground troops during Operation Enduring Freedom near Ghazni Province in Afghanistan.

Captain Gramith is survived by his wife Angie, their daughters Stella and Eva, and his father and step-mother Frederick and Cynthia and his mother and step-father Patricia and Robert.

Captain Gramith was an honorable and dedicated airman who died serving his country. His commitment to his country will stand as an inspiration to all Americans. To his family and friends, I offer my humble thoughts and prayers. May God bless them in this time of remembrance.

CONGRATULATING THE OUR LADY OF LOURDES ACADEMY CONSTITUTION TEAM

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Our Lady of Lourdes Academy Constitution Team for yet another remarkable performance in the annual We the People Competition. Having won the right to represent the State of Florida by winning the State Championship in January, Lourdes came to Washington DC and placed an impressive 7th place nationally.

For 25 years, the We the People Competition has helped further civic education and awareness by testing students' depth of knowledge and ability to apply constitutional principles to both historical and current issues. The competition, conducted on the campus of George Mason University and in hearing rooms of the U.S. House of Representatives, takes the form of simulated congressional hearings. Students testify as constitutional experts before panels of judges acting as congressional committees who then score the groups.

The hard work and research put in by the team is a testament to their commitment to civic education, as well as to the guidance and instruction of their teacher Rosalie Heffernan. I know I join all of South Florida in expressing our pride and admiration for the Our Lady of Lourdes Academy Constitution Team and their remarkable accomplishment. Congratulations to: Paula Abarca, Emily Bezold, Michelle Bueno, Gabriela Corzo, Oliva Diaz de Villega, Amelia Garcia, Patricia Garcia-Linares, Gabriela Hildalgo, Anne-Marie Hunter, Alexandra Lazcano, Maria Mendoza, Fabiola Navarro, Caitlin Opperman, Rachel Perez, Kelsey Quigley, Brigette Quintana, Cristina Sanchez, Veronica Sanchez, Kiara Taquechel, Tiffany Valenti and Clarisse Vamos!

IN REMEMBRANCE OF CAPTAIN MARK MCDOWELL, USAF

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Captain Mark McDowell of Colorado Springs and the United States Air Force.

Captain McDowell died in an F–15E crash while providing air support to ground troops during Operation Enduring Freedom near Ghazni Province in Afghanistan.

Captain McDowell is survived by his wife and parents. Captain McDowell was an honorable and dedicated airman who died serving his country. We will never forget his example and his dedication. To his family and friends, I offer my sincere thoughts and prayers. May God bless them throughout the days ahead.

JESSICA ALLEN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jessica Allen for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Jessica Allen is a 12th grader at Arvada Senior High and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Jessica Allen is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Jessica Allen for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

IN CELEBRATION OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

Against the background of this year's theme, ''Striving for Excellence in Leadership, Diversity and Inclusion,'' this month provides us an excellent opportunity to reflect upon, and honor, the many contributions Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) have made to our Nation. From fighting in our armed services, to building the transcontinental railroad, to helping America lead the world in scientific discoveries, AAPIs have played an integral role in our country's greatest achievements.

As America's fastest growing population, more and more AAPIs are performing integral roles in forward-thinking companies and in American innovation. And, we are continually seeing a greater number of AAPIs elected to serve in public office and appointed to the Federal judiciary. AAPIs are making great progress; however, there are still obstacles that must be overcome for AAPIs and other minority populations.

We must continue to work together to ensure that our country does not repeat injustices of the past. We must continue to fight back on issues like racial profiling, housing discrimination, and disparities in health care. We must continue to ensure that AAPI voices and ideas are heard.

Our country has always been the land of opportunity. Our strength has been derived from the diverse cultures, traditions, and perspectives of the people that make up our society. As we look to our country's future, we must ensure that all of the cultures and peoples that call America home are represented and promoted.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in Congress, in particular, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, to provide greater opportunity and equality so that AAPIs, and our Nation as a whole, can continue down a path of prosperity and success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TRENT FRANKS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 250. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 251. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 252.

JHA-MIER RYAN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jha-Mier Ryan for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Jha-Mier Ryan is an 11th grader at Jefferson Senior High and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Jha-Mier Ryan is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Jha-Mier Ryan for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all his future accomplishments.

A TRIBUTE TO UNITEDHEALTHCARE COMMUNITY PLAN OF PENNSYLVANIA

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Pennsylvania, which serves over 280,000 Pennsylvania residents through Medicaid, Medicare and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Pennsylvania has been under operation for more than 20 years, serving the healthcare needs of low-income Philadelphians. On May 4, 2012, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan opened a new multicultural community office in South Philadelphia to make its services more accessible to its members and to the larger community. UHC has staffed the new office with employees from a variety of ethnic groups to show the diversity of the surrounding-community.

At the UnitedHealthcare Multicultural Office in Philadelphia, residents of the community will be able to apply for low or no-cost health insurance, renew their health coverage, gain more understanding of their health benefits, and attend special events such as health and wellness workshops, citizenship and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and free health screenings.

It is with great honor that I recognize the UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Pennsylvania and the new UnitedHealthcare Multicultural Office in Philadelphia as valuable resources of the state of Pennsylvania. I am proud to have such a wonderful organization in my state and community, and I look forward to watching it continue to succeed and grow.

JWAN SAWAQUED

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jwan Sawaqed for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Jwan Sawaqed is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Jwan Sawaqed is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Jwan Sawaqed for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL MPS AWARENESS DAY

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the National MPS Society for their 37 years of supporting families while searching for cures for this genetic disease. Mucopolysaccharidosis or MPS is a group of genetically determined lysosomal storage diseases that render the human body incapable of producing certain enzymes needed to break down complex carbohydrates. The damage caused by MPS on a cellular level adversely affects the body and damages the heart, respiratory system, bones, internal organs, and central nervous system. MPS often results in intellectual disabilities, short stature, corneal damage, joint stiffness, loss of mobility, speech and hearing impairment, heart disease, hyperactivity, chronic respiratory problems, and, most importantly, a drastically shortened life span. Symptoms of MPS are usually not apparent at birth and without treatment; the life expectancy of an individual affected begins to decrease at a very early stage in their life. Research towards combating MPS has resulted in the development of limited treatments for some of the MPS diseases.

I ask my colleagues and their staff to join me in recognizing May 15, 2012 as National MPS Awareness Day. This is an important time during which the MPS disease community will help increase the awareness of this devastating disease, as well as supporting research to improve treatments, find cures and receive early diagnosis. The MPS families are encouraged to reflect and support each other and to reach out to those families who have lost loved ones to MPS. By wearing their purple ribbons and sharing these ribbons within their community, they are increasing public awareness about this disease. This date is also the start of the National MPS Run/Walk season along with other local community activities to raise awareness along with money for research and for family assistance programs. I commend the National MPS Society and their many volunteers for an unwavering commitment to bring about awareness of this disease and to continue to advocate for federal legislation to streamline the regulatory processes and to speed effective treatments and cures for their loved ones. More must be done to find cures and effective treatments, but let us reflect on the importance of this day. I ask that all of my colleagues join me in commemorating National MPS Awareness Day.

JOSEPH TRUJILLO

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Joseph Trujillo for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Joseph Trujillo is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Joseph Trujillo is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Joseph Trujillo for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all his future accomplishments.

HONORING DIANE GLASSER, CEO OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

HON. THEODORE E. DEUTCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Diane Glasser, the National and State Party Committeewoman and Vice Mayor of the City of Tamarac. As she concludes her term as Vice Mayor, we reflect on her years of dedicated community and public service which set a brilliant example for our future generations. It is truly an honor to represent her in the United States Congress.

Ms. Glasser has been integral in the significant growth and progress that the City of Tamarac has made over the past 20 years. She is a truly active and inspirational leader. She is involved in many civic and national organizations, such as the AARP, Hadassah, JAFCO, and University Hospital. Within the City of Tamarac alone, she has been a Charter Board Member, City Commissioner, and Vice Mayor. Ms. Glasser epitomizes public service, and it is unfortunate that I can only mention just a few in a long list of her tremendous accomplishments. I can affirm beyond a doubt that she has been an important leader in the Democratic Party in South Florida, and I do not want her achievements to go unrecognized.

It is a privilege to represent an individual who has done so much for Broward County and the City of Tamarac. I applaud her efforts, and even though her term has come to a close, I look forward to her continued good work for years to come.

Congratulations to Diane Glasser, together with her children and her grandchildren, as they celebrate this well deserved honor.

JONNALYNN SELL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jonnalynn Sell for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Jonnalynn Sell is an 8th grader at Mandalay Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Jonnalynn Sell is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be obtained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Jonnalynn Sell for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

HONORING MAH-RULCH MUHAMMAD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great Nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Mah-rulch Muhammad is a senior at Clements High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. Her essay topic is: In your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

The importance of participating in the political system is directly related to one of our key goals as a country: to ensure and preserve democracy. While the interpretation of democracy varies in everyone's individual perceptions, the main idea is the same: government by the people.

In other words, in a democratic society, the public has an active voice in influencing public policy and decisions. Only through effective participation, however, is it possible for this to happen. The final decisions end up affecting the public, so it is important that they speak up and make sure their voices are heard. Only when the people are involved in the political process can their needs be addressed by today's leaders, and consequently be put into public policy.

The policies that are eventually enacted and integrated into our society primarily affect the public. Therefore, the public ought to have a say in the process, as true democratic principles outline. This right does not come into place, however, if proper action and self input is not inserted. There are many options available for the public to be involved in the political process, such as voting, donating to campaigns, or joining interest groups. When people fail to use the options of political participation before them, they are slowly taking power out of their own hands, inviting the ability for the nation's liberties to be taken away.

Every individual is unique and lives under different circumstances. Income, race, gender, and opinions vary greatly from person to person. Due to this factor, it would be impossible for a certain select number of people from one majority to vote during elections for policies that they support, and have these votes reflect the nation's inclination. The idea that policies favor a select few does not seem fair, and leans towards the idea that we are fading away from the idea of democracy. The numbers of those who lack participation in the political process add up and create a hole in how much today's government reflects the will of the people.

Being involved in the government is an inherent part of democracy in that it places the individual into the political process. If the public separates itself, and does not allow its concerns to be addressed, then the problems that the everyday citizen faces won't be fixed. If one's concerns are ignored, then it creates a feeling of apathy within the nation towards the government for not addressing their needs. All of this would be the result of a simple communicational gap. The public's involvement in the political process is the key to closing the gap between themselves and the government. Once that gap is connected, we are one step closer to democracy. It is important that everybody is involved in the political process, given that every individual's opinion matters and makes up the viewpoint of the nation as a whole.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 251, due to other representational obligations in Hannibal, Missouri, I had to miss this vote.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

RECOGNIZING IBEW LOCAL 25

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the immense success that the members of the Local 25 chapter of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers have achieved. The 2,600 members of Local 25 have, for 80 years, dedicated themselves to the service of their community and achieving excellence within the electrician profession.

IBEW Local 25's service to Long Island began in 1932, when some of the finest crafts people in the world wanted to better facilitate their remarkable skills. IBEW is deeply committed to the ongoing training of its members. Seasoned associates of Local 25 eagerly pass down their accumulated knowledge to the younger generations of electricians in a fair, equal opportunity setting.

Local 25 is of vital importance to the Long Island community, and I am proud of their heritage and remarkable skill sets. The mission of this coalition of tradesmen is to produce the finest skilled electricians in the world who will produce the highest quality electrical installations. I believe the great members of Local 25 have achieved that goal.

Mr. Speaker, I honor the fine members of IBEW Local 25 for their invaluable and continuing contributions to our community. It is my great hope that they will continue to serve as an inspiration for others through their work and ongoing devotion to the great State of New York.

IN HONOR OF THE ONE HUNDRED YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF MARINE CORPS AVIATION

HON. JOHN KLINE

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May 2012 as the one hundred year anniversary of United States Marine Corps Aviation. The Marine Corps stands as a symbol of America's strength and honor, and its history serves as a reminder of the commitment and sacrifice so many Americans have made in defense of this nation.

What began in 1912 when Marine Corps 1st Lt Alfred A. Cunningham reported for flight training has extended through the ongoing operations around the world. A program that started with less than 40 men now consists of hundreds of skilled pilots, expert engineers, and experienced ground crews. In support of their brothers and sisters on the ground, they have flown over the hedgerows of Europe, the jungles of East Asia, the deserts of the Middle East, and every ocean in between. From transportation of the President, to air-to-ground fire support, to medical evacuation on the battlefield, the capabilities of Marine Corps Aviation are second to none.

In honor of Marine Aviators past and present, I have introduced H.R. 1621, legislation that pays tribute to Marine Corps Aviation with a commemorative coin. These coins will serve as a tribute to the capabilities pioneered by our earliest Marine aviators, and refined over the years to make the Marine Corps a force capable of protecting our nation "in any clime and place." As a helicopter pilot and 25-year Marine veteran, I am proud to have borne the title—Marine Aviator—and stand here today to honor one hundred years of Marine Corps Aviation. Semper Fidelis.

JESSICA GREENBURY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jessica Greenbury for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Jessica Greenbury is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Jessica Greenbury is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Jessica Greenbury for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHEN LEE FINCHER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 250, 251, 252, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on all three.

A HISTORY OF THE EXPANSION OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following letter to the editor of the NY Times that was published on 24 April 2012. The letter was written by noted constitutional lawyer, Mr. Bruce Fein, Esq. It talks about the unchecked power the office of the President of United States has acquired since WW II.

[From the New York Times, April 27, 2012]

A HISTORY OF THE EXPANSION OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER

(By Bruce Fein)

The unilateral actions of President Obama in the domestic arena to circumvent Congress are more than matched by the president's unilateralism in foreign affairs. Among other things, President Obama has unilaterally commenced war, authorized the assassination of American citizens abroad and denied the writ of habeas corpus to detainees not accused of a crime.

Executive branch power at the expense of Congress and the Constitution's checks and balances has mushroomed since World War II. Examples include President Truman's undeclared war against North Korea; President Eisenhower's executive agreements to defend Spain; President Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin Resolution regarding Vietnam;

President Nixon's secret bombing of Cambodia and assertions of executive privilege; President Clinton's undeclared war against Bosnia; and President Bush's countless presidential signing statements, Terrorist Surveillance Program, waterboarding and Iraq war.

The Constitution gave Congress the power to declare war because the president is inclined to aggrandize executive power when faced with conflict or danger. As James Madison wrote to Thomas Jefferson: ''The constitution supposes, what the History of all Governments demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has accordingly with studied care vested the question of war in the Legislature.''

The steady escalation of unchecked presidential power has transformed the Republic whose glory was liberty into an empire whose glory is perpetual war and domination.

KAYLA NAKATA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Kayla Nakata for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Kayla Nakata is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Kayla Nakata is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Kayla Nakata for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

NATIONAL DEFENSE TRANSPORTATION DAY AND NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION WEEK

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Defense Transportation Day and National Transportation Week. America has always been a leader in transportation development from the submarine to the steam engine that connected two great oceans and the first flight at Kitty Hawk to the mighty interstates that connect our cities. Transportation is our nation's lifeblood and has been a driving force of our economy. On May 18 is National Defense Transportation Day and May 13–19 is National Transportation Week.

A nation's ability to transport first responders, servicemembers, and materials to the front lines of any crisis is the key to saving lives and protecting our freedoms. Our transportation networks have enabled us to react with speed and efficiency during a crisis.

Our roads, rails, runways, and shipyards have formed the foundation for a thriving global marketplace. Letting these vital infrastructures diminish in quality hampers our ability to maintain a thriving global marketplace. Recommitting to investing and building modern day infrastructure, as we did in the 1950s, we can once again galvanize our economy and soar to new heights like that of the eagle.

Transportation has a high priority for me as a member of Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and ranking member of Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications. Crumbling bridges put our safety at risk, and antiquated infrastructure limits our capacity to respond to threats, emergencies, and hazards at home and abroad. These situations diminish our security, our prosperity, and our resilience, and we must do more to address them.

The need for strong and sustainable transportation networks has never been greater. The state of our roads and railways creates a competitive disadvantage that discourages investment and slows the pace of progress. Our nation invests only 2.4 percent of our GDP where as Europe and China invests 5 percent and 9 percent respectively into creating competitive infrastructure. We are greatly lagging behind and investing would save 1.8 million jobs and create up to 1 million more jobs.

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant program, all 50 States have launched new highway and infrastructure projects, and many have funded passenger rail development that will modernize our cities and help put more construction workers back on the job. But this is not enough; I remain committed to upgrading our infrastructure, ensuring the safety and security of our transportation systems, bringing diverse, sustainable transit opportunities to communities across our country, and investing in innovative solutions to address the transportation challenges of today and tomorrow.

On National Defense Transportation Day and during National Transportation Week, we celebrate that rich legacy and recommit to building robust infrastructure that will accelerate our economy in the years ahead. An economy built to last depends on a world-class infrastructure system. I call upon all Members to recognize the importance of our Nation's transportation infrastructure and to acknowledge the contributions of those who build, operate, and maintain these critical infrastructures.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT J. DOLD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, due to district business, I was unavoidably back in my Congressional District on May 15, 2012. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on H.R. 365, the National Blue Alert Act of 2011, ''yea'' on H.R. 3874, the Black Hills Cemetery Act, and ''yea'' on H.R. 205, the HEARTH Act of 2011.

KASSIE ORONA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Kassie Orona for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Kassie Orona is a 12th grader at Standley Lake High and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Kassie Orona is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Kassie Orona for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF USDA APHIS

HON. FRANK D. LUCAS

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. While many Americans may not have heard of APHIS, the Agency's mission is so far-reaching that most are touched by its regulatory activities or policies every day. We in the Agriculture Committee understand that when we learned last month of the cow with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) that it was APHIS' swift response and scientific approach that reassured our trading partners that U.S. beef is safe and kept trade moving. We understand that it is APHIS whose work every day keeps our country free from many invasive insects and diseases like the destructive Mediterranean fruit fly. Every day, we hear and see the positive strides this Agency is making in support of U.S. agriculture.

Since APHIS was formed in 1972, it has evolved into a multi-faceted Agency with responsibilities that include protecting and promoting U.S. agricultural health from foreign animal and plant pests and diseases, regulating genetically engineered organisms, administering the Animal Welfare Act, and carrying out wildlife damage management activities. To carry out its mission, APHIS employees work to create and sustain opportunities for America's farmers, ranchers and producers and to safeguard the nation's agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. For that, I applaud them and join in celebrating this Agency's history.

During the early 1970s, APHIS was put to the test when it spearheaded an enormous effort to control an outbreak of exotic Newcastle disease in Southern California that threatened the Nation's entire poultry and egg supply.

APHIS mobilized thousands of workers in a response that included an investigation of over 77 million birds, administration of 113 million doses of vaccines, and maintenance of a quarantine zone spanning 45,000 square miles. Success was achieved in 1974 and marked the first time any country had eradicated such a widespread outbreak of the deadly disease, and it provided a blueprint for future animal disease control efforts. Using lessons it learned from the earlier outbreak, APHIS again lead a taskforce of Federal, State, and private veterinarians in 2002 to effectively stamp out an exotic Newcastle disease outbreak in California and other Western States. This time, however, APHIS and its partners eradicated this devastating disease in one-third the time and at one-half the cost of prior outbreaks, protecting the health of the country's poultry resources, worth more than $23 billion.

Through the National Boll Weevil Eradication Program launched in the late 1970s, APHIS and its partners eradicated boll weevil from 16 of 17 cotton-producing States, with the last, Texas nearing completion of its eradication efforts. This three-decade effort has succeeded through the participation and cooperation of industry, State and Federal agriculture agencies, and APHIS in sharing costs and developing and improving eradication strategies to meet every challenge. APHIS continues its myriad of programs dedicated to keeping harmful and invasive plant pests and diseases out of this country and eradicating them quickly should they arrive. Recently, APHIS and its State and industry partners have nearly eliminated European grapevine moth infestations, keeping domestic commerce and foreign markets open for grapes, stone fruit, berries, and other commodities that would otherwise have been threatened by the pest.

APHIS assumed a new mandate for wildlife damage management in 1985, after Congress transferred the Animal Damage Control program from the Department of the Interior to USDA. Through this program, APHIS provides Federal leadership and expertise to resolve wildlife conflicts to allow people and wildlife to coexist. APHIS has provided critical support to U.S. agricultural producers over the years finding practical, humane, effective, and environmentally safe solutions when wildlife attack livestock or damage crops. But the program's impact extends beyond agriculture to urban areas, where they work to reduce wildlife hazards at the Nation's airports and military airbases, eradicate invasive species such as the Giant Gambian rat, and combat wildlife rabies.

APHIS' role in the Federal biotechnology era began in 1986 with the ''Coordinated Framework for Regulation of Biotechnology,'' which outlined a comprehensive U.S. Government regulatory policy for ensuring the safety of biotechnology research and products. In November 1987, using new policies for regulating the introduction of genetically engineered organisms that might pose risks to plants, APHIS for the first time approved a field test, for a tobacco resistant to the herbicide bromoxynil. Since then, the Agency has overseen nearly 30,000 field trials at over 86,000 different locations and approved over 80 products for nonregulated status—many of which have subsequently been further developed and released as varieties used in agriculture benefitting farmers and consumers while decreasing overall pesticide use and soil erosion.

APHIS' role in protecting and promoting the health of U.S. agriculture is also critical in the international trade arena. As part of the move to support growth in international trade while fulfilling APHIS' mission to protect American agriculture, APHIS inspectors began preclearing imports destined for the United States before they left their country of origin in the 1980s. APHIS also began employing other approaches to ensure that imported commodities were free of pests and diseases—X-ray detection devices began screening baggage for illegal material, and APHIS' ''Beagle Brigade,'' established in 1984, sniffed out prohibited foods in passenger luggage. Throughout the years, APHIS' ability to quickly respond to outbreaks of foreign plant pests and diseases, helps assure our trading partners that U.S. products are safe and that the United States is a model for protecting the health and abundance of agriculture.

Today, APHIS continues to enhance its animal welfare efforts, overseeing the care and treatment of animals regulated under the Animal Welfare Act at licensed and registered facilities throughout the United States and its territories. APHIS' risk based inspection system enables the Agency to focus its resources on the most problematic facilities and pursue enforcement against violators.

Lastly, I applaud APHIS for continuously seeking to work together with its partners and stakeholders to achieve success in its programs. APHIS is an Agency that recognizes that it must actively work with States, Tribal Nations, industry and other stakeholder groups to help manage the many issues that affect U.S. agriculture. This coordinated effort has enabled the Agency to be successful in protecting our valuable agricultural and natural resources. We have seen the results of this approach, for example, as the Agency has implemented the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill. This joint effort by APHIS, states, industry, academia, and other stakeholders has yielded great benefits—helping eradicate devastating plant diseases such as Plum Pox in Pennsylvania, increasing surveys to find foreign pests before they can become established in the United States, educating the public on reducing the spread of these pests, and enhancing research so we have better tools to protect our country from threats to our agricultural and natural resources.

As you can see, through the decades, APHIS has continued to modernize in demonstrating its vitality and significance to farmers, exporters and importers, and consumers. APHIS' leadership in protecting and promoting the health of U.S. agriculture has served the United States well. For that, I want to congratulate APHIS and its hard working employees for a highly successful 40 years, and applaud their continued commitment to the American people and U.S. agriculture.

HONORING MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL'S WE THE PEOPLE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. BASS of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the members of Milford High School's We the People state championship team.

We the People is a national competition that tests students' knowledge of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Teams from all over the country compete for various prizes and awards. With the help of their teacher, Dave Alcox, and after many months of dedication and hard work, the Milford High School team placed first in New Hampshire's We the People State Championship. In doing so, they earned a spot to compete in the National Championship here in Washington, DC earlier this month, where they placed 30th overall and first in the Unit 3 division out of more than 50 teams. I want to congratulate the following students for their accomplishments and inspiring commitment to their team:

Kelsey Bailey; Jack Betelak; Cara Brewer; Jess Byrne; Laura Elser; Mathias Christensen; Josh Clemens; Paige Craven; Emily Curry; Bekah Curtis; Molly Desmond; Adam Drescher; Robby Finan; Ryan Fitzgerald; Melissa Gray; Sarah Halstead; Ryan Hull; Kyle Joyce; Hannah Ladeau; Ally LaForge; Katie Lannin; Julia Lengvarska; Tom Lundstedt; Comfort Dum Maude; Zach O'Neill; Jon Penniman; Jason Porter; Nick Simo; James Smith; Natasija Vucicevic; and Brittney White.

Mr. Speaker, the people of New Hampshire join me in congratulating these students on a job well done, and I wish them all the best in what I know will be a very successful future.

JOSE AVILA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Jose Avila for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Jose Avila is an 11th grader at Jefferson Senior High and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Jose Avila is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Jose Avila for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all his future accomplishments.

TAIWAN PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU'S SECOND INAUGURATION

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, this coming Sunday, May 20, Taiwan will inaugurate President Ma Ying-jeou for a second term after his overwhelming election victory earlier this year. Congratulations to President Ma and to all the people of Taiwan. They embody the vision of a representative democracy that founding father Sun Yat-sen imagined.

The value of the United States-Taiwan partnership cannot be overstated. Taiwan is the ninth largest trading partner of the United States and the sixth largest agricultural market for products grown and produced here in the United States. Additionally, Taiwan has long been an important contributor towards economic and political security across Asia, benefitting the entire region.

Taiwan and the United States uphold a peaceful partnership through both trade agreements and meaningful personal relationships. I was lucky enough to take a trip to Taiwan when I was a state legislator, and it is a beautiful country with a vibrant culture. I hope someday to return.

The strength of Taiwan comes from its people. The people continue to benefit from self-governance and free-elections, and the open society and democracy of Taiwan allows for innovation and growth that puts it on a competitive footing with the most powerful and largest countries in the world.

Congratulations to the people of Taiwan and President Ma Ying-jeou on his second inauguration.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. WEBSTER TRAMMELL

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of Dr. Webster Trammell. Dr. Trammell has served in numerous positions in the education field and currently holds the position of Vice President of Development, Community and Government Relations at Brookdale Community College. His efforts to serve and educate students will be recognized during the Long Branch Concordance celebration. His actions are truly worthy of this body's recognition.

Dr. Webster Trammell has demonstrated through his work and actions his willingness and dedication to serve others. Dr. Trammell has been actively involved in educational administration since 1969. He served as Assistant Director and Director of Student Activities and Director of Housing before being named Assistant Dean of Students. In 1974, Dr. Trammell accepted the position of Director of the Educational Opportunity Fund, EOF, at Monmouth College, where he succeeded in restructuring the program to become an exemplary model for other colleges to emulate. Four years later, he accepted the position of EOF Director at Brookdale Community College successfully raised the quality of service and level of expectation produced by the department. Dr. Trammell was appointed Research and Development Officer for Brookdale Community College in 1984, serving as a member of the President's staff. He was subsequently appointed to the position of Vice President for Development, Community and Governmental Relations, the position which he holds today. In his current capacity, Dr. Trammell is responsible for the institution's governmental relations, resource development, the Brookdale Foundation and Alumni Association as well as external affairs. Dr. Trammell is a proud Alumnus of Monmouth College where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art with a minor in Education and a Master of Science in Student Personnel Services. He received his doctorate in Psychology (Psy.D.) from Rutgers University.

Dr. Trammell is a member of several professional and community organizations. He serves as a member of the Legislative Affairs and Governance Committees of the New Jersey Hospital Association and was elected in 2010 to the Regional Policy Board of the American Hospital Association. Dr. Trammell is also the Immediate Past Chairman of the Monmouth Family Health Center Corporation Board of Directors and the Immediate Chairman of the Board of Trustees to Monmouth Medical Center. His impressive involvement in community activities resulted in the presentation of the 1993 Private Industry Council Partnership Award for Education, the 2004 Red Bank Men's Club Excellence in Education Award and the 2008 SCAN John Wanat Leadership Award, among others notable accolades. Most impressively, he currently holds an 8th degree black belt and has trained in the martial arts for 43 years. Dr. Trammell currently resides in Middletown, New Jersey with his wife, Kathleen. He is the proud father of three children, Ian, Heather and Emily and grandfather to Llewelyn and Evan.

Mr. Speaker, once again, please join me in congratulating Dr. Webster Trammell for receiving the honor bestowed by the Long Branch Concordance. His outstanding service to students and community continue to touch the lives of many throughout Monmouth County, New Jersey.

CONGRATULATING TAIWAN'S PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU ON HIS RE-ELECTION

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in congratulating President Ma Ying-jeou for winning this year's presidential election in Taiwan, the Republic of China, ROC. He will be officially inaugurated as the fifth freely elected president of the Republic of China on May 20, reminding the world once again that Taiwan is a nation to be admired for her unwavering commitment to democracy and freedom.

It has been my joy to watch the success of the Taiwanese people in overcoming great obstacles and I know that President Ma will continue his record of achievement in this, his second term. We admire Taiwan's flourishing market economy and vibrant democracy. Their successes are directly attributable to the wisdom and industry of the people of Taiwan. Today nearly everyone in Taiwan is middle class and enjoys good nutrition, good health, excellent schools, low crime rates and safe neighborhoods. Politically, people are free to voice their opinions. Press freedom and human rights are guaranteed by the ROC's Constitution.

It is my hope that many countries in Asia will follow the example of this great island as a model of democracy and freedom. My colleagues and I greatly admire the accomplishments that have taken place since the end of martial law and the establishment of democracy in the 1980's. I wish the Taiwanese the best in the challenges ahead, particularly in handling cross-strait relations. I hope all of my colleagues here in the House of Representatives will be continually supportive as the Taiwanese pursue a peaceful solution to the China issue. I believe that peace and stability within the Taiwan Strait are in the best interest of the global community.

I have always cherished Taiwan's close friendship with the United States and I admire Taiwan's recent economic and democratic achievements. We look forward to working with the government and people of Taiwan in further strengthening and clarifying the commercial, cultural and other relations between the United States and Taiwan, particularly Taiwan's defense needs and Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations.

Again, congratulations, President Ma.

HONORING PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU OF TAIWAN

HON. RANDY HULTGREN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou celebrates his second inauguration on May 20. With determination and courage, he has done what most pundits thought was impossible.

Through his initiatives with China he has achieved lessening tensions between the two governments while maintaining the integrity of Taiwan's people and their free and democratic society.

These strategic steps, assumed by many to fail, have in fact produced excellent results. Taiwan, long a major world trader, has opened up trade channels with mainland China which have been accompanied by tourists from the mainland. All this has been achieved while maintaining Taiwan's security.

Peace in the Taiwan Strait, which President Ma has worked toward, is of great importance to us as a Nation; for peace, among other humanitarian advantages, lessens the need for the United States to deploy more of our military resources to the region.

I congratulate President Ma and wish him well in his second term.

JOE TINER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Joe Tiner for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Joe Tiner is a 12th grader at Arvada Senior High and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Joe Tiner is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Joe Tiner for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all his future accomplishments.

HONORING NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with you remarks I made earlier this week at home in North Texas in recognition of National Police Week. I was honored to be present with many constituents of the 24th District of Texas alongside the Addison, Carrollton, Coppell and Farmers Branch, Texas police departments remembering those brave men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice in protecting our communities and neighborhoods. It was my honor to speak to this group and it is my privilege to express again my gratitude to the men and women who serve as peace officers and protect us each day.

ADDRESS GIVEN AT MEMORIAL CEREMONY, MAY 15, 2012, LIBERTY PLAZA, FARMERS BRANCH, TEXAS

Friends, it is with both pride and sadness that I am here before you today to recognize National Police Week. We come together today to recognize and honor those men and women nationwide who gave the ultimate sacrifice as officers of the peace. We must give thanks to them and the entire law enforcement family for their selfless actions in keeping our communities safe.

National Police Week is a time for all of us to come together to understand the important role these officers play in protecting the rights and freedoms of our community. It is a time for citizens to reflect and understand the duties, responsibilities, and sacrifices of our law enforcement officers. These men and women provide a vital public service, risking their lives on a daily basis to protect our own.

Today, May 15th, 2012, marks the 20 year anniversary of the first National Peace Officers' Memorial Day Service. That first service was held in Washington, D.C., on Capitol Hill to commemorate the peace officers who had fallen nationally. In 1989, the first annual candlelight vigil was held at Judiciary Square in Washington, D.C. to honor the men and women who sacrificed their lives.

In 1991, President George H. Bush dedicated a National Memorial for these fallen men and women, honoring them for eternity. This Memorial honors federal, state and local law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety and protection of our nation and its people.

On the walls of this memorial are the names of more than 19,000 officers who have given their lives in the line of duty throughout U.S. history. Today we celebrate the lives of all these brave public servants.

Each spring since that first fateful day in 1982, we have gathered nationwide to celebrate and venerate these men and women for their bravery. I ask that you join me today in commemorating and remembering law enforcement officers past and present. These are diligent and loyal men and women. They are devoted to their responsibilities and are dedicated in their service to their communities. Their reputation for preserving the rights and security of all citizens should be honored along with their sacrifice today.

Many officers have come from a home where their mother, father, brother or sister served their community in the same capacity. Family members often serve as an inspiration for their siblings, children and peers to serve as an officer. These inspired few that have the desire to protect and safeguard our communities are truly remarkable. It is that inspiration to protect and dedicate oneself to a community that brings us here today.

These men and women who serve with one another are a family. This is a family that I am very proud to support. They have a deep partnership with their community and each other. When a fellow officer falls in the line of duty, they do not lose a colleague, but a brother or sister. These brothers and sisters may have different badges or different oaths, but their valor in the line of duty is what binds them together. This partnership and this family are being remembered nationwide today.

Every day, officers put themselves in harm's way to protect the citizens and families they serve. These men and women are the continuous barrier between lawlessness and peace.

As a former city councilman, mayor, state representative and now Member of Congress, I have had the privilege of working with our community law enforcement for quite some time. I have the honor of calling countless police officers my friends. I will continue to be proud of their deeds and accomplishments in protecting North Texas, my family and my friends in all of you.

The honor these officers receive must be derived not only from their personal deeds, but the countless acts of violence and crime they have prevented. Today and every day we should remember that with courage, these fallen officers that we call to mind have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their community.

It is with a heavy heart that we celebrate the lives of these men and women today. Let us not forgot the service and duty they have done for us. And let us pay respect to the survivors of our fallen heroes, and we humbly thank their friends and loved ones for their sacrifice.

HONORING THE BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the Blue Star Mothers of America. The Blue Star Mothers of America was founded in 1942 in order to bring together the mothers of children serving in the United States Armed Forces. In 1960, the nonprofit organization was chartered by the Congress of the United States. The Blue Star Mothers continue to provide support for active duty service personnel, promote patriotism, assist veteran's organizations and homeland volunteer efforts. Not only is the organization for mothers, but family members and friends may become associate members, and fathers of military personnel may join the Father's Association. During World War I, the Blue Star Service Flag was designed by Captain Robert L. Queissar and went on to become an unofficial symbol of a child in service. Today this same flag is an official banner authorized by the Department of Defense for display by families and associations who have members serving in the Armed Forces during a period of war. I ask that the U.S. House of Representatives honor the month of May as Blue Star Mothers Month, keeping in mind that sons and daughters continue to fight for our freedoms and protect this great Nation both domestically and abroad.

RECOGNIZING USTAD RAHAT FATEH ALI KHAN

HON. MICHAEL G. GRIMM

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. GRIMM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Ustad Rahat Fateh Ali Khan who is considered to be the ''Heart and Soul of Sufi Music.''

Rahat Fateh Ali Khan was born on January 1, 1974 in Faisalabad, Pakistan to a prominent family of Classical musicians. He carries on the 700 year-old tradition of Qawwali, a form of Muslim Sufi devotional music.

Rahat Fateh Ali Khan began his formal training in music at the age of seven and had his first performance by the age of nine. By 1997 he was considered the leader of Muslim Sufi music. As a result of his talent and devotion he has built a bridge between the East and the West—in March of 1998 he performed with Eddie Vedder in Los Angeles and has appeared many times in New York City to much critical acclaim. He has also worked on many movie soundtracks such as Dead Man Walking with Sean Penn, The Four Feathers with American composer James Horner and lastly with Mel Gibson in Apocalypto. He is also a renowned Bollywood playback singer. However, more important than his artistic acclaim, Rahat Fateh Ali Khan has been his been recognized numerous times over due to his selfless participation in benefit concerts all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, please join me, my constituents and music lovers from around the world as I recognize Mr. Ustad Rahat Fateh Ali

Khan, as he is the heart and soul of the world music community with billions of fans all over the globe.

SECOND INAUGURATION OF TAIWAN PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU

HON. JOE BARTON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou will be inaugurated for the second and final time on Sunday, May 20th. In addition to its continued democratic development, Taiwan has undergone numerous unprecedented economic, travel and tourism changes—between itself and mainland China—since President Ma first took office four years ago.

In July 2008, just over two months after taking office, President Ma launched the first regularized direct flights across the Taiwan Strait since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Such flights now number 558 per week, having greatly eased the burdens of Taiwanese living and working in mainland China. It's also made life much easier for American tourists and businesspeople crossing the Strait instead of having to change planes in Hong Kong, or another third party port, as they once did.

And in 2010, Taiwan enacted its Economic and Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with mainland China that zeroed out tariffs on a number of Taiwan exports to the mainland. Further ECFA liberalizations will follow. ECFA's allowed Taiwan companies to tap mainland consumer markets while allowing them to stay in Taiwan and trade from their own home base. ECFA's further offered Taiwanese greater consumer choice at more affordable prices, while additionally uncovering opportunities for U.S. companies that have operations on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. It's thus no wonder the American Chamber of Commerce in Taipei has, after years of calling for such changes, wholeheartedly applauded President Ma's economic openings. Slowly but surely, Taiwan's steadily reinserting itself into the global economic supply chain, strongly making its case for a resumption of Trade and Investment Framework Agreement talks with the United States.

The influx of mainland Chinese tourists to Taiwan, allowed since 2008, has boosted the island's economy while also exposing mainlanders to Taiwan's free society and vibrant democracy. This fact was most notable during Taiwan's January 14th presidential and legislative elections won by President Ma and his Kuomintang (KMT) Chinese party. Visiting mainlanders were mesmerized by Taiwan's televised debates and dueling public events, and their some of their cohorts back home even took to blogging about it. Last year, 1.8 million mainland Chinese tourists visited Taiwan. That's 30% of all 6.08 million tourists who visited Taiwan in 2011.

On this, his second inauguration, I ask my colleagues to not only congratulate President Ma on his inauguration, but also on his openings to mainland China that have not just benefited Taiwan companies and consumers, but also U.S. economic interests and enterprises in the region.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, my car battery died and I was detained from voting on Tuesday, May 15, 2012. If present, I would have voted yea on the following rollcall votes: rollcall No. 250; rollcall No. 251; and rollcall No. 252.

JEANNINE LESANTE MAZURKIWECZ

HON. LOU BARLETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. LOU BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Jeannine Lesante Mazurkiwecz, who will be recognized with the 2012 Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce Athena Award. Each year, the Athena Award is presented to a Greater Hazleton businesswoman for outstanding professional achievement. Jeannine's selfless dedication to her career and community makes her an ideal recipient of this award.

Jeannine graduated from King's College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communications. Upon completion of an unpaid internship at WBRE, a regional television station, she declined a full-time job to invest her time and talents in her local, family-owned television news station, Greater Hazleton's First Local News 13/Sam-Son Productions. Since News 13's founding in 1994, Jeannine has worked in a variety of positions. Recently, Jeannine was promoted into administration. Through her various responsibilities, Jeannine has led her team at News 13 to the top of news and information coverage.

Jeannine is also active within the community, from teaching classes at King's College to assisting all types of organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Hazleton Blind Association. Additionally, she is the cofounder of the Making a Difference Foundation and currently holds the position of Assistant Director of Corporate Relations with Professionals Organized & Working to Enrich the Region (POWER) of Hazleton. Furthermore, Jeannine finds time to mentor students at the McCann School of Business and Technology and has been a volunteer to local brownie troops.

Mr. Speaker, Jeannine is truly a pillar of her community in the Greater Hazleton Area. I commend Jeannine for her many years of committed service to the community and our country.

HONORING MAY AS OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor May as Older Americans Month. Since 1963 our Nation has come together to celebrate the seniors in our communities. This month the theme is "Never Too Old to Play", which emphasizes how important it is for older Americans to stay active and engaged in their communities.

Communities are encouraged to organize social events like trivia night, painting a mural or a team photo scavenger hunt to encourage seniors to get involved. Just this past week I hosted a senior luncheon in my district.

This annual event is not only an opportunity to listen to my constituents concerns over a great meal, but it is a time for seniors to get together and enjoy themselves. We had performances from local entertainment groups, speeches and karaoke. It was a wonderful time for all involved.

I have also introduced H.R. 3794, the Expanding Opportunities for Older Americans Act of 2011. This bill would amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to include government funding to hire seniors who still wish to be working and active. Although seniors have already given so much, I truly believe they have much more to offer.

Older Americans Month is also a great time to bridge the generation gap. Children to young adults can learn so much from the older generation, but they rarely interact in everyday life. There is so much valuable knowledge the young people from this country can receive from the older generation, and this is an opportunity for people of all ages to get out there and interact together.

This month also gives me a chance to address an issue of key importance; caring for seniors with chronic illness and preventing unnecessary hospitalizations. In-home care can make a huge difference in recovery from illness and inpatient hospital treatments. Being around family and in the comfort of one's own home makes these traumatic experiences that much less painful.

Mr. Speaker, the majority of the skilled home healthcare providers in my district deliver high-quality, clinically effective and highly efficient care. In-home care is so important for the seniors who would otherwise be forced into hospitals without it.

As an elected official I want to make sure that Medicare funds in my district are going to those who qualify and deserve it, so we can continue to provide the best care for our seniors. With such a tough economic outlook throughout the nation it is of vital importance that we are not handing money over to criminals who are trying to play the system.

Mr. Speaker, after decades of paying taxes and working hard so that they will have security in retirement, the seniors of America deserve our full support. I hope every community takes this month to plan at least one event supporting the older generation, and bringing people of all ages together.

This month I honor the seniors of the 37th district of California, as well as all seniors across the country. Thank you for all you do, and do not forget, "It is never too old to play".

RECOGNIZING THE RIVERHEAD BLUE WAVES

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Riverhead Blue Waves

Girls Basketball Team on their history-making 2011–2012 season.

The Blue Waves of Riverhead, New York went all the way to the state Class AA Final Four tournament in Troy, New York, a first in the team's history and a truly remarkable achievement. Along the way they won the 2012 Long Island Championship in a 56–50 victory over the Baldwin Bruins amidst waves of cheering fans known as the "Blue Krew." They also won the Suffolk County Class AA championship, and the Suffolk County Section XI championship, finishing the season with a 23–2 record.

Their coach, Dave Spinelli, was named Suffolk County Coach of the Year, and senior guard Jaylyn Brown was named a first-team All-Long Island player. The team was named a New York State Scholar Athlete team for the seventh consecutive year with a team grade-point average this year of 93.1.

Hailed as hometown heroes, the athletes were honored with a parade down East Main Street sponsored by the Riverhead Central School District and the Town of Riverhead on April 29th, and the entire day was designated a day of celebration. Riverhead School Board vice president Greg Meyer said the team acted as a catalyst for the entire community. "The girls played their hearts out for their team and for this community, and the residents of Riverhead and the rest of the school district came together to support the team in a major way."

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have such a talented and dedicated group of young athletes in my congressional district. They demonstrated commitment, teamwork, leadership and serve as role models for their community, proving that with hard work and a good defense, dreams do come true.

HONORING MADISON WEAVER

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Madison Weaver is a senior at Clements High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. His essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

Government is defined as the political direction and control exercised over the actions of the members, citizens, or inhabitants of communities, societies, and states. In other words, the government is the ultimate source of authority in our country. However, I believe that this power should be used with restraint. I also believe that government should focus on protecting the people, instead of controlling the people.

Helping secure jobs and keeping companies in business is something the U.S. government has been promoting heavily in the past few years. With the passing of the 'bail-out' bill, numerous corporations, that would have otherwise failed, were saved by the government's decision to give them enough money in order to stay afloat. Consequently, millions of people were able to keep their jobs. But what does that say about our government? Is it humanitarian that our government reacts in order to save those companies and jobs? No, in fact this shows that our government is pushing forth its own agenda of what will be produced in America.

The fine line between government protecting and controlling is the difference in outcome. Protecting, will ultimately promote a healthier economy; while controlling, will produce quicker results, yet negative, long-term effects. For instance, by giving money to banks that made numerous bad loans, was essentially saying that it was 'ok' to make bad business decisions. Also, by giving money to the auto industry, was essentially saying that it was 'ok' to make products that people didn't want. Yes, the government was able to save many businesses, and countless jobs; but do we want failed businesses to operate in America? The answer is, ''no''!

Instead of looking at every business failure as a sign of weakness of the government, we need to see to the failures and embrace them too. Without the fear of failure, there is no drive for success. Therefore, we need to have failures, recessions, and yes, even job losses in order to drive people to succeed and make our country better. I believe that the government has done us more harm than good in attempting to control the recession. By stepping back and letting the business cycle run its course, only then can government truly guide our country to a more productive America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, on roll call No. 250, due to other representational obligations in Hannibal, Missouri, I had to miss this vote.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTING IRAN FROM ACQUIRING A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my support for H. Res. 568. It is imperative that the United States takes necessary steps to ensure that Iran is unable to acquire the capability to produce nuclear weapons.

The United States and all our allies must respond to this threat immediately. The stability of the entire Middle East region hangs in the balance as Iran seeks this technology. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has openly threatened both the United States and Israel in the recent past and as a result, swift and harsh sanctions must be put in place against the Iranian regime.

The United States' security and interests are clearly in danger. Satellite intelligence provides us with enough information to confidently assess that Tehran is concealing their true actions. International inspectors have been denied entry into the facilities, a troublesome act if there is nothing to hide. The containment and appeasement of Iran must not be considered. Instituting aggressive sanctions against this radical regime is a prudent and necessary course of action.

H.R. 5746, A BILL TO AMEND THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986 TO MODIFY CERTAIN RULES APPLICABLE TO REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS; TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, along with my colleague from Massachusetts, Representative Neal, and Representatives SAM JOHNSON, CHARLES RANGEL, DEVIN NUNES, PETE STARK, DAVE REICHERT, JOHN LEWIS, PETER ROSKAM, EARL BLUMENAUER, JIM GERLACH, RON KIND, AARON SCHOCK, JOSEPH CROWLEY, LYNN JENKINS and ERIK PAULSEN, I rise today to introduce the Update and Streamline REIT Act (U.S. REIT Act). Congress created real estate investment trusts (REITs) in 1960, with the goal of providing Americans from all walks of life a transparent and liquid way to access the income and diversification benefits of investments in commercial real estate.

Periodically over the past fifty years, Congress has enhanced and improved the REIT rules as the real estate industry and marketplace has evolved, typically with non-controversial legislation that attracts significant bipartisan support. In that vein, the last REIT update was introduced in 2007.

A number of publicly traded REITs are headquartered in my home state of Ohio, and listed REITs as a whole have invested over $8 billion dollars to date in Ohio malls, office buildings, health care, hotel, self-storage and other properties. This investment by REITs creates jobs, improves local economies; and helps to support and beautify our communities.

The U.S. REIT Act has been developed over a lengthy period. It has considerable bipartisan support and is largely revenue neutral. If enacted, it would increase flexibility and remove certain redundant and unnecessary restrictions on REIT activities, in order to enable REITs to continue to achieve the goals on behalf of their shareholders set for them by Congress over fifty years ago.

H.R. 5746, A BILL TO AMEND THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986 TO MODIFY CERTAIN RULES APPLICABLE TO REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS; TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a bill that I'm introducing with my good friend and colleague from Ohio, Representative TIBERI, the Update and Streamline REIT Act (or U.S. REIT Act). I think it's important to note that the precursor to today's REITs began as Massachusetts business trusts over a hundred years ago. In 1960, an Act of Congress democratized investment in real estate, an asset class that had traditionally only been available to institutional investors and the wealthy, by authorizing the creation of REITs, widely-held entities that own and operate large-scale, income-producing real estate.

Since the Congressional authorization of REITs in 1960, Congress periodically has updated the REIT rules in a bipartisan manner to enable the industry to adapt to a changing marketplace and to evolve consistent with its original mandate. The U.S. REIT Act would continue that tradition.

Among other things, consistent with a provision in the Obama Administration's FY 2012 and FY 2013 Budgets, and Congressional repeal of a similar rule for publicly offered mutual funds in 2010, the U.S. REIT Act would repeal the preferential dividend rule for ''publicly offered'' REITs. Publicly traded REITs as a whole have invested over $18 billion to date in a variety of Massachusetts properties, including malls, office buildings, health care, hotel, self-storage and other properties. As a former mayor, I recognize that these companies and their tenants are the bedrock of local economies, improving communities, advertising locally, and generating property and sales taxes that support local schools districts and first responders.

I am proud to have been a co-sponsor of legislation over the years that have refined the REIT rules to ensure that REITs can continue to provide the benefits envisioned by Congress to investors from all walks of life, and I am proud to co-sponsor this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the U.S. REIT Act.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF CHARLES W. COLSON

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to a man we remembered just a few short hours ago at the National Cathedral here in Washington, DC.

The Good Book says, ''Render therefore to all their due. . .honor to whom honor.'' Charles W. Colson is certainly worthy of honor and esteem.

The earthly life of this consequential American has come to an end and I mark this occasion with a sense of profound personal loss.

Chuck Colson rose to the heights of political power and fell to the depths of disgrace. But in his fall, he found redemption in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Given a second chance, Chuck Colson devoted his life to carrying the Christian message of second chances to those in prison, and he saw countless lives changed by his compassion and example.

His voice of moral clarity was an inspiration to millions of Americans and made him an invaluable counselor to leaders in government and business. I will always count it a privilege to have been able to call him my dear friend and mentor. His dedication to moral integrity, serving his fellow man and his steadfast faith have always and will always be an inspiration to me and my family.

Karen and I offer our deepest condolences to Patty, the whole Colson family and to all who mourn the loss of Chuck Colson.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES OF MORRIS AND SUSSEX COUNTY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children of Morris and Sussex Counties as they celebrate their 25th anniversary.

Court Appointed Special Advocates, CASA, was created in 1977 to address the issue of abused and neglected children within the court system. The founder, David Soukup, a Seattle Superior Court Judge, raised concerns over making decisions on behalf of abused and neglected children without enough information. To gain more knowledge he called for volunteers to investigate the cases, make recommendations and speak on behalf of the child about what would be in his or her best interest.

It quickly became clear that CASA volunteers provided the abused or neglected children a constant adult presence that supported them by advocating for their needs within the court system. According to the CASA mission statement, CASA's intent is to ''speak up for the best interests of children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect. We recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers who provide a voice in court to assure each child a safe, permanent, and nurturing home.''

CASA of Morris County began in 1987 by the National Council of Jewish Women and later merged with the Sussex County chapter in 1996. In the last fiscal year the CASA of Morris and Sussex Counties served 354 children helping 108 reach permanency, which includes reunification with birth parents, adoption, kinship legal adoption, or independent living. Out of the 15 CASA chapters in New Jersey, the Morris and Sussex Counties chapter serves the largest percentage of children in out-of-home placement.

For 25 years, the CASA of Morris and Sussex Counties has kept children from falling through the cracks of the court system and helped them gain a stable family structure. In the past year, CASA lists among their accomplishments helping four siblings reunite with their parents in a safe environment with two of the siblings attending summer camp on scholarships, a four-year-old child who spent the first three years of her life in five different foster homes was able to be adopted into a loving family, and an abandoned 16-year-old was able to find a part-time job, educational assistance, and a path to independent living.

CASA of Morris and Sussex County's is proud that their 25 years of work has always focused on the tenet of ''every child can thrive in the safe embrace of a loving family.'' CASA has been able to provide the opportunity for abused and neglected children of Northern New Jersey to overcome their circumstance and mature into successful and caring adults.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in recognizing Court Appointed Special Advocates of Morris and Sussex Counties on their 25th anniversary.

HONORING THE ORIGINAL FLORIDA HALL OF FAME HIGHWAYMEN

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the Original Florida Hall of Fame Highwaymen. They are a group of 26 named and listed landscape artists who have been called ''The Last Great American Art Moment of the 20th century.'' These self-taught and self-mentoring African American Artists were able to define themselves against the many racial and cultural barriers of the time in which they painted, and created a body of work of over two hundred thousand paintings.

The Original Florida Hall of Fame Highwaymen, from Fort Pierce, Florida, began painting in the early 1950s and created large numbers of relatively inexpensive landscape paintings, which were done using construction materials rather than art supplies. As no galleries would accept their works, they sold them in towns and cities and along roadsides throughout Florida, often still wet, out of the trunks of their cars.

Following the death of one of their members in 1970, the remaining members created fewer works and productivity waned. However, after being re-discovered in the 1990s, they have become celebrated for their idyllic landscapes of natural settings in Florida.

In 2004, the 26 Original Florida Hall of Fame Highwaymen were inducted into the Florida Artist Hall of Fame. In addition to becoming part of Florida's culture and history, they have also received international recognition.

Eight of the original members are now deceased, but the remaining members, most now into their 70s and 80s, continue to paint, to this day. Despite racial barriers and obstacles, their success and longevity are remarkable.

Please join me in honoring the Original Florida Hall of Fame Highwaymen, for their dedication to their craft and their contributions to art in the State of Florida and around the world.

THE SECOND INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am truly honored to recognize the second inauguration of President Ma Ying-jeou, which will take place on May 20, 2012. I join with the people of Taiwan in celebrating this historic occasion.

Since the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, the United States and Taiwan have focused on creating a harmonious bilateral relationship. While our two countries have continued to share strong relations, we have been able to further strengthen our ties under President Ma's leadership.

I am pleased to note several positive developments that taken place over the course of President Ma's first term, including being recognized by the World Health Organization as an observer to the World Health Assembly. This important recognition has given Taiwan an avenue in which to address the health issues affecting its country.

Furthermore, the United States has increased trade relations with Taiwan, and U.S. agricultural and food products now account for over 30 percent of Taiwan's agricultural imports. These gains could not have been achieved independently, and such positive outcomes would not be possible without the collaboration and cooperation of President Ma's government.

Mr. Speaker, again I want to congratulate President Ma on his second term in office. I look forward to continuing my work with the President and his government to ensure a peaceful and prosperous Taiwan.

IN COMMEMORATION OF ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in commemoration of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.

This month recognizes that our country's strength comes from the diverse talents, cultures, and ideas of its people. In Hawaii, it is this very diversity that helps drive our State forward and is the basis of our rich local culture.

We honor the indigenous people of Hawaii and the Pacific islands and the Asian immigrants who have come to America seeking opportunity and freedom. Key anniversaries in the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders occur in May, including the arrival to the U.S. of the first Japanese immigrants in 1843.

As an immigrant myself, I know firsthand the challenges—and the opportunities—that so many faced when they came to America.

My mother, brothers, and I arrived with little more than the clothes on our back and my mother's determination to build a better life for her children.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have found success in all walks of life. In government alone, we recognize Senator INOUYE, president pro tempore, who chairs the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations; Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color in Congress, whose Title IX legislation ensured education equity for women and girls; and Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniane'ole, whose leadership led to the creation of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands with the passage of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920.

These distinguished leaders aren't just a source of pride for the AAPI community, they also inspire a Nation. I am proud to celebrate the accomplishments of all Asian and Pacific Islander Americans and look forward to seeing the trailblazers of the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE McINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on May 15, 2012. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall Nos. 250, 251, and 252.

SUPPORTING NOAA'S CLIMATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH, SUSTAINED OBSERVATIONS AND REGIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAM

HON. JARED POLIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of NOAA's Climate Competitive Research, Sustained Observations and Regional Information program, which was unfortunately cut by $26 million from the President's Fiscal Year 2013 budget request in the Commerce, Justice, Science FY13 Appropriations bill.

While I appreciate the funding included in this bill for NOAA's satellite programs, NASA, NIST, and NSF, and thank my colleagues who supported these programs, I urge them to work with me to restore the $26 million cut in this important climate research program.

In March, I joined 28 of my House colleagues in writing to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Science and Justice in support of the full budget request for this program.

NOAA's competitive climate program contributes to local, regional, national, and global weather and water outlooks. These are relied upon by key decision makers in cities and States throughout the country in areas such as agriculture and power generation. The State of Colorado is not only the home to world-class research institutions whose researchers are supported by this funding, but it is also a user of this information for vital natural resource governance decisions.

The southwest has experienced persistent drought conditions over the last three decades. Temperatures in Colorado have increased two degrees during the same time, a trend that will likely persist. Colorado has also experienced earlier snow melting, which desiccates our reservoirs, contributing to increased demand for water for personal and agricultural use, and increased flooding risk.

The agricultural community, water resource managers, and power suppliers across Colorado rely on the monitoring, observation, and analysis supported by this funding line to inform decisions that directly affect the health of the economy.

The importance of this need was recognized in a Memorandum of Understanding between the Western Governors Association and NOAA to provide climate information to western states to help them mitigate disaster situations stemming from flood, drought, and fires.

This Climate Competitive Research, Sustained Observations and Regional Information program also supports critical ocean observing systems, as data has shown that the highly dynamic relationship between oceans and the atmosphere affects weather and climate shifts over land. It also supports satellite calibration and validation which inform the most accurate satellite observations.

Importantly, many American businesses rely on this funding to create and manufacture environmental observing equipment.

I recognize that we must make difficult choices in our current fiscal environment. Supporting this program will continue our investments in research, observations, and modeling to help States and businesses manage environmental risk and reduce future expenses from natural disasters.

I urge my colleagues to consider restoring funding to NOAA's Climate Competitive Research, Sustained Observations and Regional Information program before this spending bill is enacted into law.

RECOGNIZING THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN) AND ITS PRESIDENT, MA YING-JEOU

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Republic of China (Taiwan) and its President, Ma Ying-jeou, on the impending inauguration of his second term on May 20, 2012. I had the distinct pleasure of meeting President Ma in October of 2011, and I wish him and the Taiwanese people well during his second term of office.

The friendship enjoyed by the United States and Taiwan rests upon a strong foundation of democracy, trade, and security. Through the elections held on January 14, 2012 and the inauguration on May 20, Taiwan is reaffirming that commitment to democracy and that is something that should be held up as an example for others in the region and the world at large.

President Ma's first term was marked by many successes, including securing observer status with the World Health Assembly and increasing trade and reducing tensions in the East Asia region. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to ensure that the U.S.-Taiwan relationship grows and strengthens and that Taiwan remains a safe, strong, and stable ally in the region.

Please join me in congratulating President Ma and in wishing him a successful second term as he guides the Republic of China (Taiwan) for the next four years.

SEQUESTER REPLACEMENT RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. AARON SCHOCK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thurday, May 10, 2012

Mr. SCHOCK. Mr. Speaker, the recent vote in support of the H.R. 5652—Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act was a necessary vote to deliver on our promise to bring an end to the fiscal nightmare in Washington. We promised to restore a better future for of children and grandchildren and the action we recently took delivers on that promise.

Section 204 of H.R. 5652 reversed two Medicaid provisions affecting the U.S. territories—increases in both the federal match rate and the cap on federal Medicaid spending—created in Obamacare. While I fully support a repeal of Obamacare, I also understand the rationale for these provisions addressed a disparity in the treatment of U.S. territories under Medicaid going back decades. Prior to the changes, Puerto Rico paid 80 percent of its share of Medicaid, even though it has a population of almost 4 million and a poverty level percentage similar to the state of Mississippi. Unlike the 50 states, where no U.S. state pays more than 50 percent of its share, the territories operate under a different reimbursement formula. The adjustment in the Medicaid payments to territories helped to close this gap.

It is imperative for Members to recognize the importance of increased Medicaid funding to the territories, especially given the deep respect we share for our fellow U.S. citizens. I urge my colleagues to ensure equitable Medicaid funding to the territories as we move forward during this necessary budgetary negotiations.

STATEMENT ON H.R. 4970

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, although I support the Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors (STOP) grant program, I regretfully had to vote no on final passage of the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization (VAWA). Even with the changes in the manager's amendment, the bill that came to the floor today remains a partisan, extremist bill that provides far fewer protections for domestic violence victims than the strong, bipartisan Senate-passed bill.

This bill would put victims of domestic violence in greater danger by rolling back key protections in current law and by excluding entire populations of women, particularly in the LGBT and Native American communities, from these valuable victim protections. Even though VAWA is a critical grant program, I could not support the House GOP version, as such I voted "nay."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast the recorded vote for rollcall No. 235. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on this measure.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

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

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, May 17, 2012 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MAY 21

2:30 p.m.
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine national security, focusing on foreign language capabilities in the Federal government.
SD–342

MAY 22

9:30 a.m.
Armed Services
SeaPower Subcommittee
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013.
SR–232A

10 a.m.
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine implementing derivatives reform, focusing on reducing systemic risk and improving market oversight.
SD–538

Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine the report produced by the American Energy Innovation Council titled "Catalyzing American Ingenuity: The Role of Government in Energy Innovation" and related issues.
SD–366

11 a.m.
Armed Services
Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee
Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013.
SD–G50

2 p.m.
Armed Services
Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013.
SR–232A

2:30 p.m.
Appropriations
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee
Business meeting to markup proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2013 for Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.
SD–138

Intelligence
To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.
SH–219

3:30 p.m.
Armed Services
Airland Subcommittee
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013.
SR–232A

5 p.m.
Armed Services
Personnel Subcommittee
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013.
SR–232A

MAY 23

9:30 a.m.
Armed Services
Strategic Forces Subcommittee
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013.
SR–232A

10 a.m.
Judiciary
Administrative Oversight and the Courts Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine protecting our children, focusing on the importance of training child protection professionals.
SD–226

Appropriations
Department of Defense Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the fiscal year 2013 Guard and Reserve budget overview.
SD–192

Finance
To hold hearings to examine progress in health care delivery, focusing on innovations from the field.
SD–215

Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine The Law of the Sea Convention (Treaty Doc. 103–

39), focusing on the United States National Security and Strategic Imperatives for Ratification.

SD–419

Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine seamless transition, focusing on a review of the Integrated Disability Evaluation System.

SD–562

10:30 a.m.

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the Secret Service, focusing on trust and confidence.

SD–G50

2 p.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Security and International Trade and Finance Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine reviewing the United States-China strategic and economic dialogue.

SD–538

2:30 p.m.

Armed Services

Closed business meeting to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013.

SR–222

Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine certain nominations.

SD–226

MAY 24

9 a.m.

Intelligence

Closed business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SH–219

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

Closed business meeting to continue markup of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013.

SR–222

2:15 p.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine programs and services for native veterans.

SD–628

MAY 25

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

Closed business meeting to continue markup of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013.

SR–222

JUNE 7

2:15 p.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine Universal Service Fund Reform, focusing on ensuring a sustainable and connected future for native communities.

SD–628

JUNE 28

10 a.m.

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine creating positive learning environments for all students.

Room to be announced

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3181–S3242

Measures Introduced: Eight bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 3188–3195, and S. Res. 462–465. **Page 3234**

Measures Reported:

H.R. 2415, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 11 Dock Street in Pittston, Pennsylvania, as the ''Trooper Joshua D. Miller Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3220, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 170 Evergreen Square SW in Pine City, Minnesota, as the ''Master Sergeant Daniel L. Fedder Post Office''.

H.R. 3413, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1449 West Avenue in Bronx, New York, as the ''Private Isaac T. Cortes Post Office''. **Page S3233**

Measures Passed:

National Kids to Parks Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 463, designating May 19, 2012, as ''National Kids to Parks Day''. **Page S3241**

70th Anniversary of Ellsworth Air Force Base: Senate agreed to S. Res. 464, commemorating the 70th anniversary of Ellsworth Air Force Base. **Page S3241**

Year of Water: Senate agreed to S. Res. 465, recognizing that the Governor of the State of Colorado has proclaimed 2012 as the ''Year of Water''. **Page S3241**

Measures Considered:

Stop the Student Loan Interest Rate Hike Act: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 2343, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for Federal Direct Stafford Loans. **Pages S3181–82, S3222–26**

Budget Resolution: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 41, setting forth the President's budget request for the United States Government for fiscal year 2013, and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2014 through 2022. **Pages S3183–3220**

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

By a unanimous vote of 99 nays (Vote No. 97), Senate did not agree to the motion to proceed to consideration of the resolution. **Page S3220**

Budget Resolution: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H. Con. Res. 112, establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2013 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2014 through 2022. **Pages S3220–21**

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

By 41 yeas to 58 nays (Vote No. 98), Senate did not agree to the motion to proceed to consideration of the resolution. **Pages S3220–21**

Budget Resolution: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 37, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2013, and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2014 through 2022. **Page S3221**

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

By 42 yeas to 57 nays (Vote No. 99), Senate did not agree to the motion to proceed to consideration of the resolution. **Page S3221**

Budget Resolution: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 42, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2013, revising the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal year 2012, and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2013 through 2022. **Pages S3221–22**

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

By 16 yeas to 83 nays (Vote No. 100), Senate did not agree to the motion to proceed to consideration of the resolution. **Pages S3221–22**

Budget Resolution: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 44, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2013 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2014 through 2022. **Page S3222**

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

By 17 yeas to 82 nays (Vote No. 101), Senate did not agree to the motion to proceed to consideration of the resolution. **Page S3222**

Cook County Airport Land—Referral Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2947, to provide for the release of the reversionary interest held by the United States in certain land conveyed by the United States in 1950 for the establishment of an airport in Cook County, Minnesota, and the bill then be referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. **Page S3241**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the issuance of an Executive Order with respect to blocking the property of persons threatening the peace, security, or stability of Yemen; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (PM–48) **Page S3233**

Stein and Powell Nominations—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, May 17, 2012, Senate resume consideration of the nominations of Jeremy C. Stein, of Massachusetts, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; that there be 90 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form to run concurrently, on both nominations, en bloc; that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote, without intervening action or debate, on confirmation of the nominations in the order listed; that the nominations be subject to a 60 vote threshold; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; provided further, that the cloture votes with respect to the nominations be withdrawn. **Page S3239**

Messages from the House: **Page S3233**

Measures Referred: **Page S3233**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Pages S3181, S3233**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S3234**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3234–35**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S3235–39**

Additional Statements: **Pages S3230–32**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S3239**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S3239**

Record Votes: Five record votes were taken today. (Total—101) **Pages S3220, S3220–21, S3221, S3222**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:56 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 17, 2012. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3242.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2013 for the Environmental Protection Agency, after receiving testimony from Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator, and Barbara J. Bennett, Chief Financial Officer, both of the Environmental Protection Agency.

APPROPRIATIONS: U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND AND U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense received a closed briefing on proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2013 for Northern Command and Southern Command Programs from General Charles H. Jacoby, Jr., USA, Commander United States Northern Command, and General Douglas M. Fraser, USAF, Commander, United States Southern Command, both of the Department of Defense.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Federal Communications Commission, after receiving testimony from Julius Genachowski, Chairman, and Robert M. McDowell, Mignon L. Clyburn, Jessica Rosenworcel, and Ajit Pai, each a Commissioner, all of the Federal Communications Commission.

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INNOVATION

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Children's Health and Environmental Responsibility concluded a hearing to examine growing long-term value, focusing on corporate environmental responsibility and innovation, after receiving testimony from Todd Brady, Intel Corporation, Washington, D.C.; Len Sauers, The Procter and Gamble Company, Cincinnati, Ohio; Parker J. Smith, Eastman Chemical Company, Memphis, Tennessee; and D. Mitchell Jackson, FedEx Corporation, Kingsport, Tennessee.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Peter William Bodde, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Piper Anne Wind Campbell, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to Mongolia, who was introduced by Representative Hochul, and Dorothea-Maria Rosen, of California, to be Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia, all of the Department of State, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 1910, to provide benefits to domestic partners of Federal employees, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1515, to permit certain members of the United States Secret Service and certain members of the United States Secret Service Uniformed Division who were appointed in 1984, 1985, or 1986 to elect to be covered under the District of Columbia Police and Firefighter Retirement and Disability System in the same manner as members appointed prior to 1984, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2218, to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration;

S. 1100, to amend title 41, United States Code, to prohibit inserting politics into the Federal acquisition process by prohibiting the submission of political contribution information as a condition of receiving a Federal contract, with an amendment;

H.R. 2415, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 11 Dock Street in Pittston, Pennsylvania, as the ''Trooper Joshua D. Miller Post Office Building'';

H.R. 3220, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 170 Evergreen Square SW in Pine City, Minnesota, as the ''Master Sergeant Daniel L. Fedder Post Office'';

H.R. 3413, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1449 West Avenue in Bronx, New York, as the ''Private Isaac T. Cortes Post Office''; and

The nomination of Joseph G. Jordan, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, Executive Office of the President.

HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM REFORM

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine identifying opportunities for health care delivery system reform, focusing on lessons from the front line, after receiving testimony from G. Al Kurose, Coastal Medical, Inc., Providence, Rhode Island; Marcia Guida James, Humana Inc., Louisville, Kentucky; and James C. Capretta, Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, D.C.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION OVERSIGHT

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Federal Bureau of Investigation, after receiving testimony from Robert S. Mueller, III, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice.

DRUG THREATS IN WEST AFRICA

United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control: Caucus concluded a hearing to examine drug threats in West Africa, focusing on drug trafficking and United States efforts to counter emerging narcotics-related threats, after receiving testimony from Thomas Harrigan, Deputy Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice; William R. Brownfield, Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and Johnnie Carson, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, both of the Department of State; and William F. Wechsler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Global Threats.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 12 public bills, H.R. 5781–5792; and 2 resolutions, H. Res. 659–660 were introduced. **Pages H2811–12**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2813–14**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 1840, to improve consideration by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission of the costs and benefits of its regulations and orders (H. Rept. 112–482);

H.R. 373, to amend the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 to ensure that actions taken by regulatory agencies are subject to that Act, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 112–483, Pt. 1);

H.R. 3433, to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide transparency and require certain standards in the award of Federal grants, and for other purposes, with amendments (H. Rept. 112–484); and

H. Res. 611, providing for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 112–485). **Page H2811**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Barton (TX) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2717**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:47 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H2722**

Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the guest chaplain, Reverend Tom Ellsworth, Sherwood Oaks Christian Church, Bloomington, Indiana. **Page H2722**

Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012: The House passed H.R. 4970, to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, by a recorded vote of 222 ayes to 205 noes, Roll No. 258. **Pages H2726–44, H2745–81**

Rejected the Moore motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report the same to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a yea-and-nay vote of 187 yeas to 236 nays, Roll No. 257. **Pages H2779–81**

Pursuant to the rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in H. Rept. 112–481, shall be considered as adopted. **Page H2726**

H. Res. 656, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 4970 and H.R. 4310), was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 235 yeas to 186 nays with 1 answering "present," Roll No. 255, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 235 yeas to 187 nays, Roll No. 254. **Pages H2726–44**

A point of order was raised against the consideration of H. Res. 656 and it was agreed to proceed with consideration of the resolution by a yea-and-nay vote of 239 yeas to 183 nays, Roll No. 253. **Pages H2726–31**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in honor of all law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. **Page H2743**

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures which were debated yesterday, May 15th:

Border Tunnel Prevention Act of 2012: H.R. 4119, amended, to reduce the trafficking of drugs and to prevent human smuggling across the Southwest Border by deterring the construction and use of border tunnels, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 416 yeas to 4 nays, Roll No. 256; **Pages H2744–45**

Amending the Mesquite Lands Act of 1986 to facilitate implementation of a multispecies habitat conservation plan: H.R. 2745, amended, to amend the Mesquite Lands Act of 1986 to facilitate implementation of a multispecies habitat conservation plan for the Virgin River in Clark County, Nevada; and **Page H2745**

Chimney Rock National Monument Establishment Act: H.R. 2621, amended, to establish the Chimney Rock National Monument in the State of Colorado. **Pages H2781–82**

Committee Filing Authority: Agreed that the Committee on Appropriations have until 6 p.m. on May 25, 2012 to file four privileged reports on bills making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security; military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies; the Department of Defense; and the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs. **Page H2745**

Notice of Intent to Offer Motion: Representative Rahall announced his intent to offer a motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 4348. **Page H2745**

Suspension—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measure under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed:

National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act: H.R. 5740, to extend the National Flood Insurance Program. **Pages H2782–87**

Notice of Intent to Offer Motion: Representative Barrow announced his intent to offer a motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 4348. **Page H2787**

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013: The House began consideration of H.R. 4310, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense and to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013. Further proceedings were postponed. **Pages H2787–96**

H. Res. 656, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 4970 and H.R. 4310), was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 235 yeas to 186 nays with 1 answering ''present,'' Roll No. 255, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 235 yeas to 187 nays, Roll No. 254. **Pages H2726–44**

A point of order was raised against the consideration of H. Res. 656 and it was agreed to proceed with consideration of the resolution by a yea-and-nay vote of 239 yeas to 183 nays, Roll No. 253. **Pages H2726–31**

Recess: The House recessed at 9:45 p.m. and reconvened at 2:28 a.m. on Thursday, May 17th. **Page H2810**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he submitted to the Congress an Executive Order he has issued with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Yemen and others—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 112–109). **Page H2782**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Five yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2731, H2743, H2743–44, H2744, H2780–81, H2781. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 2:29 a.m. on Thursday, May 17th.

Committee Meetings

FORMULATION OF THE 2012 FARM BILL: COMMODITY PROGRAMS AND CROP INSURANCE

Committee on Agriculture: Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management held a hearing entitled ''Formulation of the 2012 Farm Bill: Commodity Programs and Crop Insurance''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS; AND MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Appropriations: Full Committee held a meeting to consider Revised Suballocation of Budget Allocations for Fiscal Year 2013; Full Committee held a markup Homeland Security Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2013; and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for FY 2013. The Revised Suballocation of the Budget Allocations for Fiscal Year 2012 was agreed to. The Homeland Security Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2013; and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for FY 2013 were ordered reported, as amended.

EXPLORING STATE SUCCESS IN EXPANDING PARENT AND STUDENT OPTIONS

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing entitled ''Exploring State Success in Expanding Parent and Student Options''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

BROADBAND LOANS AND GRANTS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Broadband Loans and Grants''. Testimony was heard from Larry Strickling, Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information & Administrator, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), Department of Commerce; Jonathan Adelstein, Administrator, Rural Utility Service (RUS), Department of Agriculture; Todd Zinser, Inspector General, Department of Commerce; and David Gray, Deputy Inspector, General, Department of Agriculture.

WHERE THE JOBS ARE: PROMOTING TOURISM TO AMERICA

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade held a hearing entitled ''Where the Jobs Are: Promoting Tourism to America''. Testimony was heard from Representative Mazie K. Hirono; Nicole Y. Lamb-Hale, Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing and Services, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Full Committee began a markup of H.R. 4471, the ''Gasoline Regulations Act of 2012''; and H.R. 4480, the ''Strategic Energy Production Act of 2012''.

THE IMPACT OF THE DODD–FRANK ACT: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A SYSTEMICALLY IMPORTANT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Financial Institutions held a hearing entitled ''The Impact of the Dodd-Frank Act: What It Means to be a Systemically Important Financial Institution''. Testimony was heard from Lance Auer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Institutions, Department of Commerce; Michael Gibson, Director, Division of Banking Supervision and Regulation, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; and public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION'S STRUCTURED TRANSACTION PROGRAM

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's Structured Transaction Program''. Testimony was heard from Bret D. Edwards, Director, Division of Resolutions and Receiverships, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; Jon T. Rymer, Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; and public witnesses.

INCREASING MARKET ACCESS FOR U.S. FINANCIAL FIRMS IN CHINA

Committee on Financial Institutions: Subcommittee on International Monetary Policy and Trade held a hearing entitled ''Increasing Market Access for U.S. Financial Firms in China: Update on Progress of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

ASSESSING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES AND NEEDS AMIDST ECONOMIC CHALLENGES IN SOUTH ASIA

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia held a hearing entitled ''Assessing U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities and Needs Amidst Economic Challenges in South Asia''. Testimony was heard from Robert O. Blake, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs, Department of State; Nisha Desai Biswal, Assistant Administrator for Asia, U.S. Agency for International Development; Daniel Feldman, Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Department of State; and Alexander Thier, Assistant to the, Administrator and Director, Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development.

STATUS OF THE PROCESSING OF THE CAMP ASHRAF RESIDENTS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Status of the Processing of the Camp Ashraf Residents''. Testimony was heard from Daniel Fried, Special Advisor on Ashraf, Department of State.

ACCESS CONTROL POINT BREACHES AT OUR NATION'S AIRPORTS: ANOMALIES OR SYSTEMIC FAILURES

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Transportation Security held a hearing entitled ''Access Control Point Breaches at Our Nation's Airports: Anomalies or Systemic Failures?''. Testimony was heard from John P. Sammon Assistant Administrator, Office of Security Policy and Industry Engagement, Transportation Security Administration; Charles K. Edwards, Acting Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security; and public witnesses.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEAHY–SMITH AMERICA INVENTS ACT

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Implementation of the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act''. Testimony was heard from David Kappos, Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property, Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), Department of Commerce; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a markup of H.R. 5512, ''Divisional Realignment Act of 2012''. H.R. 5512 was ordered reported, without amendment.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a markup of the following measures: H.R. 1192, the ''Soda Ash Royalty Extension, Job Creation, and Export Enhancement Act of 2011''; H.R. 3973, the ''Native American Energy Act''; H.R. 4043, the ''Military Readiness and Southern Sea Otter Conservation Act''; H.R. 4381, the ''Planning for American Energy Act of 2012''; H.R. 4382, the ''Providing Leasing Certainty for American Energy Act of 2012''; H.R. 4383, the ''Streamlining Permitting of American Energy Act of 2012''; and H.R. 4402, the ''National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act of 2012''. The following measures were ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 1192, H.R. 3973, H.R. 4043, H.R. 4381, H.R. 4382, H.R. 4383, and H.R. 4402.

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S GREEN ENERGY GAMBLE

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs, Stimulus and Government Spending held a hearing entitled ''The Obama Administration's Green Energy Gamble: What Have All the Taxpayer Subsidies Achieved?''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

HATCH ACT: OPTIONS FOR REFORM

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy held a hearing entitled ''Hatch Act: Options for Reform''. Testimony was heard from Carolyn Lerner, Special Counsel, U.S. Office of Special Counsel; Irvin Nathan, Attorney General, District of Columbia; and public witnesses.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 4310, the ''National Defense Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2013'' (amendment testimony). The Committee granted, by a record vote, a rule providing for further consideration of H.R. 4310 under a structured rule. The rule provides no additional general debate. The rule makes in order as original text for purpose of amendment an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of Rules Committee Print 112–22 and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points against the amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in the Rules Committee report accompanying the resolution and amendments en bloc described in section 3 of the resolution. The rule provides that the amendments printed in the report 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.

The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report or against amendments en bloc described in section 3 of the resolution. Section 3 of the resolution provides that it shall be in order at any time for the chair of the Committee on Armed Services or his designee to offer amendments en bloc consisting of amendments printed in the report not earlier disposed of. Amendments en bloc shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services or their designees, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The original proponent of an amendment included in such amendment en bloc may insert a statement in the Congressional Record. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Representatives Bartlett, Smith (WA), Franks (AZ), Langevin, Wittman, Bordallo, Coffman (CO), Speier, Garamendi, McGovern, Polis, Young (AK), Markey, Gingrey (GA), Jackson Lee (TX), Murphy (PA), Lee (CA), Gohmert, Schiff, Mulvaney, Welch, Pearce, Yarmuth, Rivera, Tonko, Chu, and Amash.

U.S. TRADE STRATEGY: WHAT'S NEXT FOR SMALL BUSINESS EXPORTERS

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''U.S. Trade Strategy: What's Next for Small Business Exporters?''. Testimony was heard from Miriam Sapiro, Deputy United States Trade Representative, Office of the United States Trade Representative; and public witnesses.

CREATING AMERICAN JOBS AND ASSURING THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF AMERICA'S WATERWAYS

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation held a hearing entitled ''Creating American Jobs and Assuring the Safety and Security of America's Waterways: A Review of the Coast Guard's 5-year Capital Improvement Plan''. Testimony was heard from Vice Admiral John Currier, Deputy Commandant for Mission Support, United States Coast Guard.

OPTIMIZING CARE FOR VETERANS WITH PROSTHETICS

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Optimizing Care for Veterans with Prosthetics''. Testimony was heard from Linda A. Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs; Lucille Beck, Acting Chief Consultant, Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

EXAMINING OPERATIONS AND OVERSIGHT OF TAX–EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Oversight held a hearing entitled ''Examining Operations and Oversight of Tax-Exempt Organizations''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

TAXATION OF LABOR AND TRANSFER PAYMENTS

Joint Economic Committee: Committee concluded a hearing to examine how the taxation of labor and transfer payments affect growth and employment, after receiving testimony from Richard Rogerson, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey; Andrew G. Biggs, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C.; and Simon Johnson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management, Cambridge.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2012

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: business meeting to markup proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2013 for Military Construction and Veteran Affairs, and Related Agencies and Department of Homeland Security, 10:30 a.m., SD–106.

Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to receive a closed briefing on proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2013 for European Command and Special Operations Command Programs, 2 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, to hold hearings to examine the United States response to tsunami generated marine debris, 10:30 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine S. 2146, to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to create a market-oriented standard for clean electric energy generation, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine the Social Security Administration, focusing on saving taxpayer dollars and serving the public, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Edward M. Alford, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia, Mark L. Asquino, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Douglas M. Griffiths, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique, and David J. Lane, of Florida, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture, all of the Department of State, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Indian Affairs: to hold an oversight hearing to examine fulfilling the Federal trust responsibility, focusing on the foundation of the government-to-government relationship, 2:15 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 2554, to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2017, S. 2276, to permit Federal officers to remove cases involving crimes of violence to Federal court, S. 2076, to improve security at State and local courthouses, S. 2370, to amend title 11, United States Code, to make bankruptcy organization more efficient for small business debtors, and the nominations of David Medine, of Maryland, to be Chairman, James Xavier Dempsey, of California, Elisebeth Collins Cook, of Illinois, Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, and Patricia M. Wald, of the District of Columbia, all to be a Member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, 10 a.m., SD–226.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, hearing entitled ''Formulation of the 2012 Farm Bill: Commodity Programs and Crop Insurance'' public witness day, 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, Full Committee, markup of Defense Appropriations Bill for FY 2013, 10 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Full Committee, markup of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill for FY 2013, 10 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Full Committee, continue markup of H.R. 4471, the ''Gasoline Regulations Act of 2012''; and H.R. 4480, the ''Strategic Energy Production Act of 2012'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Examining the Settlement Practices of U.S. Financial Regulators'', 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Insurance, Housing and Community Opportunity, hearing entitled ''U.S. Insurance Sector: International Competitiveness and Jobs'', 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Iran Sanctions: Strategy, Implementation, and Enforcement'', 10 a.m., 2127 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade; and Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, joint hearing entitled ''The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement: Challenges and Potential'', 2 p.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, hearing entitled ''Cuba's Global Network of Terrorism, Intelligence, and Warfare'', 3 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management, hearing entitled ''Department of Homeland Security: An Examination of Ethical Standards'', 9:30 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, hearing on H.R. 2168, the ''Geolocational Privacy and Surveillance Act'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement, hearing on H.R. 3039, the ''Welcoming Business Travelers and Tourists to America Act of 2011'', 1 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on the Constitution, hearing on H.R. 3803, the ''District of Columbia Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act'', 4 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs, hearing on H.R. 3065, the ''Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act''; and H.R. 3706, to create the Office of Chief Financial Officer of the Government of the Virgin Islands, and for other purposes, 2 p.m., 1334 Longworth.

Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, hearing on H.R. 1103, the ''American Memorial Park Tinian Annex Act''; H.R. 3100, the ''San Antonio Missions National Historical Park Boundary Expansion Act''; H.R. 3365, the ''Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act Reauthorization of 2011''; H.R. 4400, the ''Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Salt Pond Visitor Center''; and S. 270, the ''La Pine Land Conveyance Act'', 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation, hearing entitled ''Working for a Fire Safe America: Examining United States Fire Administration Priorities'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Trade, hearing entitled ''Supporting Economic Growth and Job Creation Through Customs Trade Modernization, Facilitation, and Enforcement'', 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Human Resources, hearing entitled ''State TANF Spending and Its Impact on Work Requirements'', 2 p.m., 1100 Longworth.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013''; and ''Committee Report: Performance Audit of Defense Intelligence Surveillance, and Reconnaissance'', 10 a.m., HVC–304. Portions of this hearing will be closed.

Joint Meetings

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: to receive a briefing on Ukraine's upcoming elections, focusing on political parties, civil society and domestic observers ahead of the elections, the electoral framework, as well as the broader political context, 2 p.m., 210, Cannon Building.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 17

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, May 17

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: The Majority Leader will be recognized. The Majority Leader intends to begin consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 3187, FDA User Fee.

At 10:30 a.m., Senate will resume consideration of the nominations of Jeremy C. Stein, of Massachusetts, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and vote on confirmation of the nominations at approximately 12 p.m.

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Resume consideration of H.R. 4310—National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Barletta, Lou, Pa., E819
Barton, Joe, Tex., E819
Bass, Charles F., N.H., E816
Bishop, Timothy H., N.Y., E814, E819
Boustany, Charles W., Jr., La., E811
Brady, Robert A., Pa., E812
Burton, Dan, Ind., E817
Cardoza, Dennis A., Calif., E809
Cohen, Steve, Tenn., E819
Deutch, Theodore E., Fla., E813
Dold, Robert J., Ill., E815
Faleomavaega, Eni F.H., American Samoa, E811
Farenthold, Blake, Tex., E809
Fincher, Stephen Lee, Tenn., E814
Franks, Trent, Ariz., E812
Frelinghuysen, Rodney P., N.J., E821
Grimm, Michael G., N.Y., E818
Hastings, Alcee L., Fla., E822
Hirono, Mazie K., Hawaii, E822
Hultgren, Randy, Ill., E817
Jones, Walter B., N.C., E814
Keating, William R., Mass., E823
Kline, John, Minn., E814
Lamborn, Doug, Colo., E810, E811, E811, E812
Lucas, Frank D., Okla., E815
Luetkemeyer, Blaine, Mo., E811, E814, E820
McCaul, Michael T., Tex., E809
McIntyre, Mike, N.C., E822
Marchant, Kenny, Tex., E813, E818
Matsui, Doris O., Calif., E812
Meehan, Patrick, Pa., E818
Moran, James P., Va., E810
Neal, Richard E., Mass., E821
Olson, Pete, Tex., E810, E813, E820
Pallone, Frank, Jr., N.J., E817
Pence, Mike, Ind., E821
Perlmutter, Ed, Colo., E812, E812, E813, E813, E813, E814, E815, E815, E816, E818
Polis, Jared, Colo., E822
Reed, Tom, N.Y., E820
Richardson, Laura, Calif., E815, E819
Roskam, Peter J., Ill., E822
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana, Fla., E811
Schock, Aaron, Ill., E823
Scott, Tim, S.C., E809
Simpson, Michael K., Idaho, E817
Tiberi, Patrick J., Ohio, E820
Wilson, Frederica S., Fla., E821
Yarmuth, John A., Ky., E823

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