House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, January 25, 2016, at 2 p.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2016

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable Tom Cotton, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, who has set our fragile years in the heart of Your eternity, we find gladness and peace under the shadow of Your wings.

Today provide our lawmakers with wisdom to embrace the right priorities. May they strive to sacrifice for the things that will live beyond their years so that history will celebrate their foresight and courage. Grant that their lives and labor will reflect Your greatness, compassion, and love, Lord, keep them from embracing a false patriotism that would render unto Caesar what belongs to You. Stir them to new heights of excellence as You open their eyes to the unfolding of Your loving providence.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. Hatch).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:


To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable Tom Cotton, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

Orrin G. Hatch, President pro tempore.

Mr. Cotton thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

AMERICAN SAFE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Republican leader has said that he is going to bring and, in fact, has brought to the floor the House-passed refugee bill, as he calls it. It is, of course, an immigration bill. Yesterday he said that the debate over the bill should be based on "facts and common sense." I agree with that. The facts speak for themselves. Our enemy is clearly defined. ISIS is the defined organization. It is a terrorist organization that poses a threat to the United States, women, children, and families fleeing persecution. They are not the enemy; ISIS is the enemy. We should be focusing all of our efforts on defeating our real enemy, the brutal, evil ISIS. Yet the bill the Republican leader is bringing to the floor scapegoats refugees who are fleeing war and torture instead of creating real solutions to keep Americans safe.

You don't have to take my word for it. The junior Senator from Arizona has said he will oppose the bill because it is "intended to knock out all refugee entrants and I'm not there." So says the junior Senator from Arizona.

National security experts from Democratic and Republican administrations have warned against advancing bills such as this.

Former Secretary Gates is such a good person. I enjoyed working with him very much. Yesterday he said—in words much stronger than I am going to say right now—that the Republicans running for President don't understand the issue. He is much stronger and more firm in saying that what they are talking about is ridiculous. By the way, he is a Republican.

President Obama has already made it very clear that he will veto this legislation. As written, this bill will not be signed into law. Some say it is a waste of our time. By advancing this bill, Republicans are creating a terrible distraction for the sake of embracing the hateful rhetoric, vitriol of the Republican Party's standard bearers, Donald Trump and Ted Cruz.

I guess this should come as no surprise to anyone. Over and over again Republicans remain committed to
pledging loyalty to the divisive platform that has been built by the Republican people running for President, led by, at this stage, Donald Trump.

We believe we must destroy ISIS. Everyone on this side of the aisle believes we should destroy ISIS and defend our nation, but we believe we can accomplish this goal without compromising Americans' core principles. Sadly, many leading Republicans have proposed policies that compromise our fundamental values and threaten the identity of our great nation. Democrats are committed to opposing the violent views of Donald Trump and providing the American people with solutions that make our nation safer. We think it is way past time for the Senate to vote on these policies.

My friend, the Republican leader, has pledged over and over again that when the Republicans lead the Senate, they will use an open amendment process. For example, he said the following: ‘I said at the beginning of my time as majority leader that the open amendment process was going to be the rule rather than the exception.’

My friend went on to say that tough votes should be expected, and I quote: ‘We’ll just take our chances. You know, we’re big men and women. We’re prepared to vote on proposals that are offered from both sides.’

If Senate Republicans are prepared to abide by this, Senate Democrats will seek to advance a limited number of amendments on this bill that is before this body. I am not talking about tons of amendments or scores of amendments, but four or five amendments. For example, we could have one that dramatically increases the funding for local police anti-terrorist efforts and airport security. That is one that we want to see underresourced. We could close the terror gun loophole to prevent those on the no-fly list from being able to buy firearms, explosives, or radiological materials, as has been attempted. We would also seek to denounce Donald Trump’s reprehensible proposal to impose a religious test on admission to the United States.

The Democratic ISIS security bill has been filed. It is a very important piece of legislation. It includes keeping guns out of the hands of terrorists and stopping radicalization here in the United States. It includes active shooter training. As I have already indicated, we are going to move our airport security substantive forward so we can prevent dirty bombs and work abroad to take care of refugees who are over there.

These are the amendments we feel confident about, based on the statements my friend has made. We are not asking for unlimited amendments. I have listed four amendments here.

The Republican leader here in the Senate and the Republican Speaker have pledged their loyalty to Donald Trump and his disgraced policies. They have said that if he is the nominee, they will, of course, support him.

As a frontrunner for the Republican nomination, Donald Trump and his proposals are leading the public debate in our country. Republicans who support these illogical plans should be prepared for the next logical step: voting on his vision of America.

Over here, we believe that all of these measures are deserving of a vote. I talked about four of them. We are ready to vote on the proposals now—this week. If for any reason the Republican leader needs more time to discuss the proposals with his caucus, we are happy to reschedule the vote.

Now, I know it is a big day in the Senate because during my news briefing on the way to work, I heard that the junior Senator from Florida is going to be here to vote—and the junior Senator from Texas. They will actually be in the Senate to vote. It is a big day. I know we have a tight schedule because they are going to be here for only an hour or two, but perhaps we could have a debate on the amendments we are offering. I am sure that if we offer these amendments, the Republicans will offer amendments, and we could have some time here to deal with these amendments. But we will not allow Republicans to hijack the Senate floor to play politics with our nation’s security. The American people deserve better. I look forward to offering these amendments.

I publicly want everyone to know that I did not try to jump ahead of my friend the Republican leader. I was told by staff that I should go first. If I had known the Senator was going to be here so quickly, I would have waited, so I am sorry about that.

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S.J. Res. 22, a resolution that would nullify a rule issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Army to clarify the jurisdictional boundaries of the Clean Water Act. The rule, which is a product of extensive public involvement and years of work, is critical to our efforts to protect the Nation’s waters and keep them clean; is responsive to calls for rulemaking from the Congress, industry, and community stakeholders; and is consistent with decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

We must protect the waters that are vital for the health of our communities and the success of our businesses, agriculture, and energy development. As I have noted before, too many of our waters have been left vulnerable. Pollution from upstream sources ends up in the rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and coastal waters near which most Americans live and on which they depend for their drinking water, recreation, and economic development. Clarifying the scope of the Clean Water Act helps to protect these resources and safeguard public health. Because this resolution seeks to block the progress represented by this rule and deny businesses and communities the regulatory certainty and clarity needed to invest in projects that rely on clean water, I cannot support it. I am therefore vetoing this resolution.

Barack Obama.


MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Acting President pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The Acting President pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

AMERICAN SAFE ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, our country has a proud record of admitting the oppressed as refugees to our shores, yet the debate about how to safely admit refugees from Syria and Iraq is a serious conversation that deserves a serious response from Washington. It is difficult to effectively vet immigrants from a war-torn country where records may sometimes no longer exist at all. Security is enforced at the point of entry to our shores, and DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson has said organizations such as ISIL may like to try to exploit
the refugee program. So is it any wonder that the citizens we represent are concerned?

According to one recent survey, nearly 80 percent of Americans and 77 percent of Democrats say refugees should go through a robust, secure vetting process. President Obama seemed to suggest these Americans were motivated by some animus toward widows and orphans. I would suggest they are motivated by a love for their families and communities. I remind the President—and his country—a proud tradition of compassion, and we have settled millions of refugees from around the world. Many Americans are telling us they want to continue helping others, but they want to do it in a smarter and more secure way.

So I want to say this before moving forward. In his State of the Union Address, President Obama decried the political divisions that have widened during his Presidency. He called for cooperation, or concern, and. He warned that “democracy breaks down when the average person feels their voice doesn’t matter.”

“Democracy,” he said, “doesn’t work if we think the people who disagree with us can be isolated by malice.”

I ask him to reflect on those words. We each have a choice in this discussion. We can glibly dismiss the sincere concerns of middle-class families or we can work to unify Americans by pursuing bipartisan and balanced solutions.

Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives chose bipartisan and balanced solutions when they worked together to pass the American SAFE Act a few weeks ago. Democrats and Republicans in the Senate should choose bipartisan and balanced solutions by working together to advance the American SAFE Act today.

This bipartisan bill would allow Washington to back up, take a breath, and ensure it has correct policies and security screenings in place before moving ahead with the refugee program for Iraq and Syria. No wonder dozens of Democrats joined with Republicans to pass this balanced bill with a veto-proof majority over in the House. It is certainly worrying to hear that Senate Democrats are now being pressured to block us from even debating it. I understand the political pressure to oppose this balanced bill may be intense, but it is also intensely shortsighted, and I urge our Democratic friends to resist it.

Boosting confidence in our Nation’s vetting process is critical for our citizens, just as it is critical for every refugee who truly needs our help. Our Democratic friends know a cloud of unfair stigmatization threatens to hang over legitimate refugees so long as Democrats block commonsense safeguards to weed out ISIL sympathizers. If our Democratic friends are serious in what they imply about promoting tolerance for widows and orphans and in strengthening security for Americans, they will not vote to block the Senate from debating balanced, bipartisan legislation that can advance both priorities simultaneously.

Let’s work together to enact the American SAFE Act and its reforms, and let’s work together on the root of the problem. Refugees are fleeing Syria because of a brutal civil war, and they are fleeing Iraq because the terrorist group Al Qaeda in Iraq has evolved into the largest terrorist group in history—ISIS—so the ultimate solution is to make the region somewhere they can return to.

Here is what hasn’t helped: The precipitous withdrawal of our advise and assist force from Iraq, the indecision attached to drawing and erasing red lines in Syria, mocking the genuine concerns of American citizens here at home.

Here is what will help: the administration cooperating across the aisle to finally develop a serious plan to confront ISIL. That is what the American people continue to call for, that is what the American people deserve, and it is what the administration will pursue if it is about helping both our country and the victims escaping this brutal terrorist group.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore, The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I think we have the makings of an agreement here, at least the way I understood the Republican leader.

We agree that refugees should go through a robust screening process. The bill we have before the Senate, though, is stressing bureaucracy and paperwork. Each refugee who comes to this country—and there are about 100 a day—would have to be signed off by three Cabinet Secretaries. That is 300 personal signatures a day.

We don’t want more paperwork.

What we have said is we want four amendments to change the underlying bill. We are not going to be demanding days of debate time. We would be happy—we are happy—we would be happy with whatever the leader felt appropriate. We believe we should move forward with real solutions, not paperwork.

We are not saying we don’t want to get on the bill. We are willing to get on the bill. We want four amendments. That is it, four amendments. I am sure the leader will look this over and get back to me at the appropriate time, but we are willing to work on this bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore, The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I will obviously be talking to the Democratic leader on a way forward on the bill, and we will have those discussions and report back.

Mr. REID. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The right honorable, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMERICAN SAFE ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, similar to most Americans listening to President Obama’s State of the Union Address last week, I found his take on national security and world affairs rather surprising.

According to a poll in December, 60 percent of the American people see national security and terrorism as a major concern, and they have good reason to be worried.

As President Obama finishes his last year in office, Syria is wracked by civil war. Iraq is in turmoil, Russian aggression is growing, North Korea has tested yet another nuclear weapon, Saudi Arabia and Iran are immersed in a cold war, and ISIS continues its campaign of terror. Yet, according to the President, we have nothing to worry about; America’s leadership is strong, and we are headed in the right direction.

Unfortunately, this fairytale version of our global situation stands in stark contrast with reality. In his State of the Union Address, the President did acknowledge, “The world will look to us to help solve these problems, and our answer needs to be more than tough talk.”

Well, I couldn’t agree more, but unfortunately tough talk with no action has been the hallmark of this administration. In 2011, after the onset of the Syrian civil war, both President Obama and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated unconditionally that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had to go. The President drew a line in the sand: If Assad used chemical weapons, America would act. But when Assad flouted this red line, killing his own people— including women and children— with the large-scale use of sarin gas, the President chose to forgo a decided military response and instead pursue negotiations involving the Russians, working out a compromise that ultimately strengthened Assad’s position, and the results of the President’s decision have not been pretty.

In the wake of the negotiations, an emboldened Vladimir Putin invaded Crimea and eastern Ukraine, and the situation in Syria got worse. It appears now that the Assad administration will outlast Obama’s. Worse, our allies in the Middle East no longer trust America to come to their aid. The President’s failure to back up tough talk with action has undermined American leadership, and this may take years, if not decades, to repair.
This week the Senate is taking up the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act, which addresses the Syrian refugee crisis—an byproduct of President Obama’s failing foreign policy. Thanks to a provision of the President’s flawed nuclear deal with Iran, more than $100 billion in Iranian assets, including oil revenue, were made available to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This means that Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, including the Quds Force—which is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American service members—just received a big influx of cash. Again, this is thanks to the deal President Obama considers to be perhaps the major foreign policy achievement of his presidency.

While I am glad that the hostages held by Iran are coming home to their families, it is a mistake to think this means Iran all of a sudden will now play nice. Iran’s leadership knows very well that it won the lottery with this nuclear deal, and it desperately wants Iranian assets unfrozen and sanctions lifted. Now that the Iranian leadership has received its payout, Iran will be further emboldened.

When negotiating this deal, the Obama administration assured Congress that the United States would make sure Iran kept its end of the bargain. Well, it is already clear from October’s ballistic missile test that Iran is determined to test the President’s resolve and flout international restrictions. We cannot let those provocations go unanswered.

President Obama is right that when conflict arises, the world looks to the United States for leadership. However, it takes more than talk to provide the leadership the world needs. In his last year in office, I hope President Obama will move beyond rhetoric and start offering realistic solutions to the growing number of security concerns that face our nation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The Acting President pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise on January 20, 2016, the 35th anniversary of the return of 53 Americans by the Iranian Government to the shores of the United States of America after captivity for 44 days in Iran. As the members of the Senate will remember, they were employees of the U.S. Embassy in Iran who were brutally attacked, sent through mock executions, subjected to beatings, subjected to brainwashing, subjected to torture, and for 44 days we were out of communication with their loved ones and our country. Fortunately, we successfully negotiated their release, and on January 20, 1981, they were released back to the United States.

But that release included the execution of the Algerian Accords between the United States and the Iranians, which prohibited any hostage from suing the nation of Iran for compensation for their captivity. The Iranian regime continues to use chlorine bombs indiscriminately to kill his own people, and ISIS executes anyone who is not considered loyal. It is no wonder the Syrian people want out.

Yet, with the mass exodus of refugees come other security concerns, including the threat of ISIS infiltrating the refugee population. Senior and U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials have made it clear that we are concerned that an unquately vetted Syrian refugees. As we know from reports, at least one of the terrorists responsible for the deadly attacks in Paris passed through a refugee processing checkpoint in Greece. To quote the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, “I don’t put it past the likes of ISIL to infiltrate operatives among those refugees... that’s a huge concern of ours.” The American LEF Act helps address this concern by requiring the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Director of National Intelligence to certify that Syrian and Iraqi refugees have been thoroughly vetted and do not pose a security risk before they are allowed to enter the country. This is a reasonable request, and if the administration wants to assure the American people that these refugees are not a threat, then it should have no problem providing such certification.

I plan to file an amendment to this bill that would also give more authority to individual States when it comes to the resettlement of refugees. Last year, many Governors expressed a desire, shared by their constituents, that Syrian refugees not be resettled in their States. My amendment would grant Governors a presence at weekly refugee resettlement meetings within the State Department and give those Governors veto power over the resettlement of certain refugees in their States. Under my amendment, if a Governor’s office is not satisfied that its security concerns have been addressed by the required security checks, the Governor can veto the resettlement question. Any refugee, once admitted to the United States, would still be free to travel from State to State as he or she pleased. This amendment would simply increase States’ rights by giving Governors a say in any decision by the Federal Government to resettle large populations of refugees in their States. This is a reasonable solution to the concerns that were raised by the Governors of over 30 States, and I hope we can have a vote on this amendment.

Over the weekend, the world witnessed another byproduct of President Obama’s failing foreign policy. Thanks to a provision of the President’s flawed nuclear deal with Iran, more than $100 billion in Iranian assets, including oil revenue, were made available to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This means that Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, including the Quds Force—which is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American service members—just received a big influx of cash. Again, this is thanks to the deal President Obama considers to be perhaps the major foreign policy achievement of his presidency.

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When negotiating this deal, the Obama administration assured Congress that the United States would make sure Iran kept its end of the bargain. Well, it is already clear from October’s ballistic missile test that Iran is determined to test the President’s resolve and flout international restrictions. We cannot let those provocations go unanswered.

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I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The Acting President pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The Acting President pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IRANIAN HOSTAGE RELEASE

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise on January 20, 2016, to speak on the floor of the Senate to acknowledge this day as the 35th anniversary of the return of 53 Americans by the Iranian Government to the shores of the United States of America after captivity for 44 days in Iran. As the members of the Senate will remember, they were employees of the U.S. Embassy in Iran who were brutally attacked, sent through mock executions, subjected to beatings, subjected to treatment, and if 44 days we were out of communication with their loved ones and our country. Fortunately, we successfully negotiated their release, and on January 20, 1981, they were released back to the United States.

But that release included the execution of the Algerian Accords between the United States and the Iranians, which prohibited any hostage from suing the nation of Iran for compensation for their captivity. The Iranian regime continues to use chlorine bombs indiscriminately to kill his own people, and ISIS executes anyone who is not considered loyal. It is no wonder the Syrian people want out.

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I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The Acting President pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The Acting President pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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they were held that long. I am glad now that the ending of that show is a successful ending, because we brought them home and we saw to it they were compensated. Some of them have passed away. Some of them had taken their own life. Some of them had difficulties. They were sent back to their home country, and who works overseas that if you are taken, we will stand behind you and we will never ever forget—whether it is 444 days or 35 years—one an American serving our country, always an American serving our country. We will always be there for you, and we will go to every effort and every length, even if it does take 35 years.

On the anniversary of their release in 1981 when they came back to the United States, we pay tribute to those great Americans who served our country and were held hostage in Iran. We give thanks that we have the kind of men and women who are willing, day in and day out, to sacrifice on behalf of our great country. May God bless each and every one of them, and may God bless the United States of America.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The general legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMERICAN SAFE ACT

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a pending legislative matter we will be discussing later in the day, the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act of 2015. This is the title of the bill that was passed by the House in November. It is now pending before the Senate, and we will be discussing it later.

I am going to talk for a few minutes, but the punch line is as indicated on this board. We are talking about who are America's foreign enemies. This is a bill that deals with Iraqi and Syrian refugees. I assert that refugees are not our enemies; ISIL is our enemy. Yet, for some strange reason, in the 18th month of a war against ISIL, Congress has been unwilling to debate our real enemy.

First, refugees are not our enemies. The refugee crisis, with refugees coming from Syria and now Iraq, has been called the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. Four million Syrians have left their native country because of being exposed to the atrocities of being barrel-bombed by Bashar al-Assad and now the atrocities of ISIL and other terrorist organizations. Those 4 million have left to find haven from this horrible violence, just as any family would. Over 200,000 Syrians have been killed by this violence, and now the number is probably approaching 300,000. In addition to the 4 million Syrian refugees who have left Syria to escape violence, there are an additional 8 million Syrians who have left their homes and been displaced within the country and who could leave the country at any moment as the violence continues. Victims of violence, victims of unspeakable atrocity first perpetrated by the horrible dictator Bashar al-Assad and second by terrorist groups such as ISIL. Yet this bill would say these refugees are enemies.

There is a story that means an awful lot to me personally, and I hope you will indulge me.

A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

By chance a priest came along, but when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him the next day. He handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, "Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here."

"Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked.

The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy."

Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

This is a story that was written 2,000 years ago, but it is not a story about yesterday, it is a story about every day of human life on this planet. They are beaten-up people lying by the side of the road, and the choice we have to make as individuals or as a society is do we pass by or do we act as the Good Samaritan did—in a compassionate way?

In fact, I would argue that the Good Samaritan story actually isn't tough enough. If we called the refugees of the modern-day equivalent of a Good Samaritan, it is as if we were going over to the man and not passing by but kicking the man who had been beaten and robbed by bandits.

Let me move away from Scripture and talk about American values.

The Statue of Liberty that stands in New York Harbor is graced with a powerful poem, "The New Colossus," written by an American poet, Emma Lazarus. Emma Lazarus was a member of a young Jewish family in New York. There was a fundraising campaign to build the pedestal upon which the Statue of Liberty stands in New York Harbor. The Federal Government didn't have the money, so the fundraising was done privately. Emma Lazarus wrote a poem about the Statue of Liberty for a fundraising contest to help raise money, and this is why that statue is there now. The poem is called "The New Colossus." The Colossus references one of the wonders of the ancient world, the Colossus of Rhodes. Emma Lazarus wrote the poem about the Statue of Liberty, calling it "The New Colossus."

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame, With conquering limbs astride from land to land; Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand

A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand Gloves world-wide welcome, her mild eyes command The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame— "Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" Cries she With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

The debate that we will undertake about this bill, about whether we call refugees enemies is a debate about who we are as a nation. Let's honor our history, let's honor our values, and let's do what Americans have always done—been willing to extend a hand to those who are victimized by atrocity in other lands, rather than extend the back of our hand and label them as enemies.

Now, I don't dislike everything about this bill we are about to debate. I actually really like the title. The content, I don't like. The title, "American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act of 2015." We have an enemy. We have been at war with ISIL for 18 months. We have spent $5 billion in this war. We have deployed thousands of American troops in this war. Eleven members of the American Armed Services have been killed while on deployment in Operation Inherent Resolve. We have an enemy. The enemy is not refugees from Syria—the enemy is ISIL.

We all know the facts about ISIL, this organization that claims to be inspired to create a worldwide caliphate. They have slaughtered Christians and other religious minorities by the thousands. They have beheaded American hostages, including American aid workers. If there is a modern-day equivalent of a Good Samaritan, it is an American aid worker who is willing to help somebody out. ISIL has kidnapped, captured, and beheaded American aid workers. The number of deaths just this weekend—400 more people kidnapped by ISIL in Iraq and Syria. The number of deaths that have been in the tens of thousands by ISIL, and as I have said, beheading American hostages, 11 American servicemembers killed, but it is beyond
Iraq and Syria. ISIL has claimed credit for bringing down an airliner, killing tourists in the Sinai. ISIL has claimed credit for bombing and shooting attacks, killing hundreds in Paris. ISIL has claimed credit for a bombing at a peace rally in Ankara, Turkey that killed hundreds and then a bombing outside the Blue Mosque in Istanbul 2 weeks ago that killed 15 and injured dozens more. The shooters in San Bernardino were inspired by ISIL, even if they were not directly connected to them. Within the last few days, we saw another attack and explosion in Jakarta that was claimed by ISIL. Now, that is who an enemy is—not a refugee who is fleeing ISIL. ISIL is the enemy. ISIL must be defeated. We have not been debating ISIL—and we haven’t been willing to debate ISIL in 18 months. Instead, we are trying to claim that refugees are the enemies.

Why has Congress been silent about ISIL for 18 months? Our President has asked Congress: do your job and declare war against ISIL. He even sent an authorization for military action months ago. Eleven months ago, the President sent to Congress a proposed authorization against ISIL. There has not been a vote on the floor in the House. There has not been a vote on the floor in the Senate. There has not been a debate on the floor of the House or Senate. There has not been a debate or vote in committees in the House or Senate. For 11 months, since the President asked us, “Let’s get involved and take action against ISIL,” there has been no action. And it is not just the President. General Dunford, the Marine general, who is now head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before the Armed Services Committee. I asked him: will we use an authorization against ISIL? He said it would send a strong message to ISIL. It would send a strong message to our allies. But here is what he said that really grabbed me, coming from a heavily military-minded member: Our troops are deserving of respect. It doesn’t work out the way we hope.

I asked General Dunford: Would it be good to have an authorization against ISIL? How would our troops respond? Here is what he said: What our young men and women need—and it is virtually all they need to do the job we asked them to do—is the sense that what they are doing has purpose, has meaning, and has the support of the American people. Our troops think Congress is indifferent to this.

Virginia is very military. We are very closely connected to it. I have a child in the military, one of my three kids. Charts of troop deployments all over the world, including the debate about Congress right now, which is, while we are deployed overseas, fighting this battle and risking our lives, Congress doesn’t care and would rather not talk about it. Secretary Panetta has recently given a speech saying Congress should act.

So our President, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary Panetta, and others have said: Congress has this debate. There is an enemy out there. Have the backbone to name it as an enemy and authorize action against this enemy.

Constitutionally, Congress should act. One of the most important powers in the Constitution is article I, section 8, in the definition of the roles of Congress. It is Congress that declares war, not the President. That was put in the Constitution by the Framers—Virginians like James Madison—who knew that, before 1787, war was a matter for the Monarch, the Emperor, and the Sultan. But he said, “In America, it is going to be different.” We are not going to make a declaration of war for the Executive. We are going to make a declaration of war for Congress. Once declared, the President can implement, but it is Congress’s job. Congress is not doing what the Constitution commands.

Imagine one of the family members of the 11 service members who have been killed while deployed in Operation Inherent Resolve—killed in combat, killed when their jet was taking off of an aircraft carrier and crashed into the ocean or otherwise killed during deployment. Brightest and best are sent, as they volunteered for our American military. They were sent overseas to fight an enemy—who we all agree is an enemy, who we all agree is conducting atrocities—and that pride of your life, killed while serving our country. And yet Congress will not even have a debate about whether ISIL is an enemy and whether we should declare war against ISIL and instead wants to have a debate about whether refugees from ISIL should be called our enemies. Imagine how you would feel if you were one of those families. And Congress was even unwilling to dignify the loss of your loved one by 2 minutes of debate or vote on the floor of either the Senate or the House. David Ignatius wrote a piece yesterday in the Washington Post. “The ugly truth: Defeating the Islamic State will take decades.” The last line of his article says this:

The next President is going to inherit an expanding war against a global terrorist adversary. The debate about how best to fight this enemy hasn’t even begun.

After 18 months, after deaths of American troops, after all these atrocities, after bombings in cities all over the world, the debate even to declare war against ISIL and craft a strategy, and then say we, Members of Congress, individually, are putting our names on this.

Members of Congress have been looking actively to avoid a vote on this for 18 months because a war vote is tough. Under the best of circumstances, there are going to be consequences that will be painful and tragic. There will be American lives lost, and that is under the best of circumstances. War isn’t always fought under the best of circumstances. There will be surprises. There will be twists and turns. We will go down a path such as trying to train and equip a moderate Syrian opposition and find it doesn’t work out the way we hope.

I think in Congress both Houses, both parties, have had a sense that, well, maybe if we don’t vote and we just criticize the President and we just kind of not put our eyes on the ball, it will just be easier. We are going to avoid it, well, I would like to avoid it, but that is so disrespectful to the oath we took, where we pledged to live up to the powers and the responsibilities of Congress. It is so disrespectful to the volunteer military deployed overseas, risking their lives, and the families of those who have already lost their lives.

First, what is true of a tough vote, in the grand scheme of things, as against the sacrifice our troops are making overseas? Now, that is something that is really hard. Having to cast a tough vote is not that hard. It is not that hard. We can do this. We can do this.

The only action that has been taken since this war started 18 months ago was on a bill I introduced, an authorization against ISIL. I introduced it in September of 2014, 1 month after the war started. It got a 10-to-8 vote in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Sadly, it was a partisan vote. It was right at the end of the previous Congress, and there was no action. A number of those who voted against it said: Look, the major-
with 2 weeks left in the session? When the majority changes, we can take it up. Some said the President hasn’t even sent a draft authorization yet. It is premature to do it.

Now we have the President’s draft authorization, we have had it for 11 months and done nothing. Now we have seen—and there can be no doubt at this point—the evil nature of this threat we face and the expanding and complicating nature of this threat we face. Now is the time, finally, for Congress to step up to our responsibility and do our job.

I have used a couple of literary references, so let me close with one. A great Irish poet—I am biased—William Butler Yeats, wrote a poem at the end of World War I. He surveyed the wreckage of World War I, about 100 years ago.

In a lot of historians’ views, World War I was kind of one of the most needless wars in some ways. It was unclear what it was about, but what it really was about was decaying monarchies that wouldn’t change. Instead of changing, they let a terrorist action in the assassination of a nobleman—a leader of the Balkans—trigger the start of World War I. It was mechanized slaughter, and millions lost their lives. The United States came in and played a very important role, and at the end of the day, they were the peacemaker who had to come in to resolve it.

Yeats wrote a poem after World War I surveying this wreckage of these societies. It is called “The Second Coming.” He expressed a real concern about the state of society at the time because what he noticed at that time was that “the best lack all conviction and the worst are filled with passionate intensity.”

We have an enemy, ISIL, and I think we can all agree that they are filled with passionate intensity. They are the worst in their human rights violations, their atrocities, and their complete disrespect for human life. They are the worst. They are the enemy. We should be debating about them.

The best lack all conviction. We are the best Nation in the world. I firmly and deeply believe that. I have believed it every day of the 58 years that I have been alive. We are the best. We have the best system of government in the world, while 4 of 5 systems of government is often described as three coequal branches, there is a reason they put the legislative branch in article I, the executive in article II, and the judiciary in article III. This is the first among the coequal branches because we are direct representatives of the people. That is how it was structured so that we would be the best of the best—the best branch in the best government in the best Nation in the history of the world.

Do we lack conviction? If we are willing to call refugees fleeing from violence our enemies but we are afraid to take up a debate about whether ISIL is an enemy to support our troops in harm’s way—that is the question I am asking today. I know we are the best. Where is our conviction?

So I ask my colleagues, in connection with this bill, let’s keep the title to it. Let’s call it the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act. Let’s call it the American Security Against ISIL. But let’s not turn our backs on the victims of the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro Tempore (Mr. TILLIS). The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am glad I happened to come to the floor when the Senator from Virginia was speaking on this topic. I didn’t come to speak on the topic, but I know how passionately he feels about it. I find myself agreeing with much of what he has to say about what our military deserves in terms of the support not only of the President but also of the Congress and the American people. Whenever we send our troops into harm’s way, our men and women in uniform deserve to know they have the unified support of the U.S. Government and hopefully the American people.

I wish to tell my friend from Virginia, who has been on this topic for some time, that I think there are some practical impediments to what the Senator is suggesting, and maybe we can find a way to work together to address them.

First of all, there is the question of what is the strategy. I think Congress is reluctant to issue an additional authorization for the use of military force until we know what the President’s strategy is, not just in Syria, in Iraq, but also with the travel and the movement of people back and forth from those war-torn countries to the United States or to other parts of the world, including the visa waiver countries of those people—people who can travel freely from that area to those visa waiver countries and then come to the United States. The third part of it, which we have been addressing and which the FBI Director has brought to our attention on the Senate Judiciary Committee, has to do with radicalization of people back here at home through the use of social media or the Internet. I would say to my friend that this is a serious problem, and we are doing all we can with what we have been doing. But, again, the practical problem is the absence of a real strategy.

I fear that with 1 year left for this President in office, one of the goals of some of the proponents—I am not casting aspersions; I am just saying I am concerned about this—one of the goals would be to issue an authorization for the use of military force that would actually tie the hands of future Presidents, because apparently this President thinks he can’t get the authority he needs. It is true, they just got a draft that they have sent over here for us to consider, but the President seems—at least to me—to be suggesting by his actions and most of what he is doing that he thinks he has all the authority he needs.

So I want to say to my friend that I don’t doubt your sincerity, and I admire the point you are trying to make, but the practical problem is the absence of a real strategy: the absence of a strategy from the Commander in Chief and the proposal—one of the proposals; I think it came out of the Foreign Relations Committee—that would actually limit the options available to the Commander in Chief were this to be passed. But those aren’t insurmountable problems; those are things that, once identified, we can focus on and work a little bit more.

I thank the Senator for his continued advocacy on this issue, and I admire his determination to see this through to a good conclusion.

Mr. President, what I came to the floor to talk about is a bill we are going to be voting on this afternoon called the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act and also called the American SAFE Act.

I wish he was still here. I know he just left, but I want to make one point on the chart the Senator from Virginia had where he suggested that some assert refugees are the enemy. That is not true. That is the opposite of true. The American people are the most generous people in the world when it comes to admitting refugees and naturalizing new American citizens. In the past few years—if my memory serves me correctly, we naturalize between 800,000 and 1 million new citizens a year. America is the most open, welcoming country in the world because we recognize this is a source of our great strength. The brains, the ambition, and the hard work that go together with people who are unhappy with their current circumstance and who are looking to live the American dream and what they have to do in order to come here to America to be a part of that through a legal system of immigration I think is something to be applauded and celebrated.

But this bill is about something else. This is about our national security. This is not an anti-refugee bill. That is immediately where the President went and where some of the other folks on the President’s side of the aisle went, was suggesting that somehow, by being concerned about our own national security, we were somehow anti-refugee. That is demonstrably false. All we are asking for and all this legislation provides is passed by a bipartisan vote of the House of Representatives—is to enhance the screening of refugees so that this system cannot be exploited by terrorists—a tactic ISIS has encouraged. Our adversaries, particularly the Islamic State, recognize the fact that the American government has the ability to advance their cause, which is to kill innocent men, women, and children in this country.
This legislation doesn’t close the door to refugees or go back on America’s great traditions and who we are as a people. All it does is add safeguards to our refugee admissions process and updates it in light of the threats we currently face.

The distinguished Presiding Officer was probably in the same hearings I was in or the briefings with Jeh Johnson, the Director of Homeland Security. Following some of these threats, the administration unilaterally enhanced some of their screening mechanisms. I applaud them for that. That is important to do. But they can’t sit here and tell us with all seriousness that Congress can’t do much in or we can’t have a debate and we can’t have an amendment process on legislation which is designed to do what they themselves said they are trying to accomplish, which is to protect us and enhancing some of the screening process.

All we are trying to do—and it is not a small thing; it is our No. 1 responsibility as part of the Federal Government to ensure the national security of our country. Our chief goal in this legislation is to protect our national security. That is the responsibility and accountability as part of the Federal Government. Our chief goal in this legislation is to protect our national security. That is the responsibility and accountability as part of the Federal Government.

Why would our friends across the aisle want to filibuster this legislation by voting no this afternoon at 2:30 and deny us an opportunity to actually debate the legislation? Under the rules of the Senate, they are free to offer suggestions, by way of amendment, about the legislation which is designed to do what they themselves said they are trying to accomplish, which is to protect us and enhancing some of the screening process.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the Presiding Officer (Mrs. Ernst). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. He went on to say: “It is true that we are not going to know a whole lot of the Syrians that come forth in this process, just given the nature of the situation.” That is understandable. Syria has been engaged in a civil war over the last few years, and it is hard to imagine that we know a lot about those who want to come here as refugees. It doesn’t mean they shouldn’t come here, but we do need to enhance the security and make sure we are confident that the ones who do come will not be a threat to the public.

The bill would ensure that the FBI and other national security intelligence agencies have actually certified to the security of the refugee screening program. It is called accountability—some people don’t think we have enough of here in Washington, DC. Something bad happens, and there is some nameless, faceless bureaucrat who is blamed. What this would do is put the responsibility and accountability where it belongs.

There is no doubt that we live in turbulent times. Our national security experts tell us that they have never seen a more diverse, a more complex array of threats around the world. Our Refugee Admissions Program should be examined and updated to respond to those threats, and that is what this legislation attempts to do.

Unfortunately, we don’t have to look very far to see examples of why this legislation is necessary. Earlier this year in Houston, a man born in Iraq entered the country as a refugee and was later charged with providing material support, for example. I am sure it is not the only example of why this legislation is important. We are still learning more about that particular case, but what we already know is alarming.

According to media reports, he was associated with members and sympathizers of ISIS. We know that investigators found an ISIS flag at his home in Houston, TX. Just last week it was reported that his plans included setting off bombs at two popular malls in Houston, TX. Houston is one of our most populous metropolitan areas—certainly in Texas—in the country. Can you imagine what kind of carnage two bombs going off at shopping malls could wreak? According to reports, this individual was communicating with another man, also born in Iraq, who entered the United States in 2012 as a refugee and who had ties to terrorist groups and fought twice in Syria and allegedly was trying to go back to Syria to fight for Islamic militants. This individual was communicating with another person with terrorist ties, and it certainly should raise all of our suspicion and concern.

Both of those refugees from Iraq. That doesn’t mean the refugee program should be dismantled or abandoned entirely. What it should tell us is that we better be darned sure that whoever comes in through the refugee system has been adequately vetted to protect innocent potential victims here in the United States. Fortunately, in this instance, our law enforcement officials acted effectively and quickly to prevent a tragedy, but they can’t be right 100 percent of the time. If they can’t be right 100 percent of the time, and innocent people are hurt or killed, if we don’t do everything in our power to stop it, then I think we are partially responsible. This is not a theoretical problem, and Congress has the opportunity to act to try to enhance public safety. So knowing all of this, it is baffling to hear the discussion among our Democratic colleagues that they may not even allow us to get on the bill this afternoon.

I have seen some news reports suggesting that the Democratic leader is saying: Well, if there is some sort of an amendment process that could be agreed to, then maybe they would allow us to do that. I would encourage those discussions to go forward, but we shouldn’t just say: Well, you get three or four amendments on your side and we get four or five on our side. We ought to invite and welcome all constructive legislation to make this as good as it can be. We don’t need a debate to go on. We need to bring it to the floor and allow an open amendment process under the rules of the Senate.

This is a debate worth having, and this is one our constituents deserve to hear. I hope the latest news reports are some reason for encouragement that our Democratic colleagues are going to allow us to get on the legislation. Again, this is not a partisan issue—or it shouldn’t be.

Last fall several Obama administration officials testified about their concerns about radicalized individuals and what threat they could pose, as a refugee, if they gain entry into the United States. Homeland Security and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security before the Senate and House Homeland Security Committees and said: “I am concerned that we do the proper security vetting for refugees we bring into the country.” I agree with him. That is what this legislation addresses.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the year was 1939, the Nazis were in control of Germany, and Kristallnacht had occurred. It was the night of broken glass. It was the night when the Nazi storm troopers literally invaded the shops and homes of the Jewish citizens who were living in Germany. They harassed, beat, and killed them. It was perfectly clear where this was headed.

The Nazis had targeted Jewish people and those Jewish people—innocent people—were going to be their victims.
Some of them decided the only place to go was to leave Germany and to come to the United States of America. They boarded a ship called the SS St. Louis and set sail for the United States. First, they arrived in Havana, Cuba, seeking refuge. The Cuban people turned them away. They next came to Miami, FL, and asked the United States of America if these 900 innocent Jewish citizens of Germany could seek refuge and become refugees in the United States. They were turned away. With no other alternative, they went back to Germany.

The Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, kept track of what happened to those passengers on the SS St. Louis—those people seeking refuge in the United States. At least one-third of them died in the Holocaust, killed by the Nazis. At that time, Senator Robert Wagner of New York came to the floor and asked: Couldn’t we—at least as a nation—agree to allow 10,000 Jewish children to come to safety? In the United States to escape the Nazis in Germany? His efforts were stopped and defeated. Even these children who would be Jewish victims of Nazi oppression were rejected by the U.S. Senate. I mention in the history of this Chamber and a sad moment in the history of the United States.

After the war, we reflected on what had happened. We realized that this great, strong, and caring Nation had made a mistake. Innocent people had died because we rejected these Jewish refugees from Germany. Therefore, after World War II, the United States decided to take a different approach and show leadership to the world when it came to accepting refugees, and since then we have. There have been exceptions, but we have said that our country is open—as most civilized countries on Earth are open—to those who face oppression, suffering, death, and a lack of safety. We have established a process for this, and it isn’t easy. Each year it becomes more and more difficult and more and more challenging.

If you are a refugee wanting to come to the United States, he prepared. It will take at least 1 year of investigation—and sometimes up to 4 years of an investigation—before you might be allowed to come to this country. We go through background checks, fingerprints, biometric measurements, and photographs. It is a lengthy, frustrating, and difficult process. For people who come to our shores from foreign countries, there is no higher standard than the standard we apply to those who seek refugee status. Each year about 70,000 refugees are accepted in the United States. There are many more who want that opportunity, but only 70,000 can clear this process.

We come to this debate on the floor of the U.S. Senate aware of what has happened in Syria. Over the course of the last few years, the war that has raged in Syria has claimed over 200,000 lives. Half of Syria’s 23 million people have been forced out of their homes—half of them.

I have a friend in Chicago. He is an extraordinary man. His name is Dr. Mohammed Sahloul. He is a well-respected practicing doctor. He came to seek refuge in the United States. He now has an established medical practice. His family is from Syria—the Bahamut section of Syria. Because he feels so strongly about the war that is killing these innocent people in Syria, he has risked his life every few months to go to Syria and treat the victims of that war and violence. His wife Suzanne Sahloul works with the Syrian refugees who come to Chicago. The two of them have made a personal commitment to Syria, which was the birthplace of their parents. Dr. Sahloul returns from his visits to Syria and asks to meet me regularly, and I always say yes. As painful as it is, I sit there, as I did yesterday in a restaurant in downtown Chicago, as Dr. Sahloul sat there at his tablet on his iPad, one after the other, of the children he treated in Syria. These children are the victims of barrel bombs by President Assad and now of Russian bombing.

He goes to communities where people are literally starving to death—starving to death in the year 2016—in Syria. He shows me their emaciated bodies until I turn away and can’t look at it anymore.

I say to my colleagues in the Senate who follow this debate and know what we are voting on—the Syrian crisis we face today, I would argue, is the most serious humanitarian crisis of our time. What is happening to these people is unimaginable.

A few months ago I joined several of my colleagues and we went to an island in Greece called Lesbos. This is the stopping point for the refugees. Once the Syrian refugees have gone through the process of being inspected by the Turks, they are put into rafts or boats and off they go into the Aegean Sea. These are boats that are between 5 and 10 miles of the Aegean Sea in plastic rafts. They put more passengers in those rafts than should be in there because the smugglers are getting paid 1,000 to 2,000 euros, or about $2,000-plus, for each of the refugees they can cram into these boats. They push them off from the shore in Turkey and point them toward the island of Lesbos. There are babies in those boats. The passengers wear lifejackets, which everyone is familiar with, but what do you do when a baby is born in a lifejacket? Well, I saw what they wore. Many of them were wearing plastic water wings, the kind we put on our little kids when we put them in wading pools, and off they go into the Aegean Sea. Some of them don’t make it. Some of them drown and die.

What would cause a family to pick up and risk their lives and spend $2,000 per person to take this deadly journey? It is because they are desperate and need a place to be safe. It is that basic.

So the President has said the United States will accept some of these refugees. Ten thousand is the number he said. Of course, each one of them has to go through a lengthy background check and will be asked all these important questions before they are allowed to come into our country—10,000. We know there are millions displaced globally and that this number continues to grow. Isn’t it ironic that 10,000—the same number Senator Wagner of New York asked for when it came to Jewish children in Germany—is the same number the President has asked for when it comes to Syrian refugees.

Sadly for these refugees, and many others, they couldn’t have picked a worse time to come to the United States of America because, frankly, we are engaged in a Presidential campaign where many strong statements have been made about these Syrian refugees. It is hard for me to think about what I saw on the island of Lesbos—these families with children—and to square that with the descriptions I have heard from those who have called them terrorists in training. It couldn’t be further from the truth.

So this afternoon, at 2:30 p.m. on the Senate floor, we will be asked to vote on a measure relative to the Syrian refugees. Let’s call it for what it is. This is an effort to stop any Syrian refugee from coming to the United States regardless of whether it is a mother and a child because what it says is that before they can come to the United States, you have to have the personal signature and personal certification of the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, the Director of the FBI, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Director of the Bureau of National Intelligence. It is physically impossible to ask the directors of the FBI, who has the responsibility of monitoring FBI activities all around the world, to literally sit down and sign 100 personal certifications a day which would bring us to this goal.

This legislation is not designed to make the process safer. It is designed to stop Syrian refugees from coming to the United States. I know we are living in a dangerous time in this world. I want us to do everything thoughtfully and sensibly and everything possible to protect the American people from any possibility of terrorism.

I still remember well when I was a Member of this body on September 11, 2001, and what America endured. I have not forgotten. I read, as all of us do, about the terror that is now visiting San Bernardino and in many other places. But to exclude Syrian and Iraqi refugees and to say that we are not going to allow any of them to come in because they are required to sign a form of proof that we know makes it next to impossible is unfair and inconsistent with the values of the United States.

I made a point of meeting these Syrian refugees and their families who have made it here. I met with my Governor in my State of Illinois and my colleagues to do the same: Get beyond the screaming rhetoric of the
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Do my colleagues believe that a person who is on the terrorist watch list should be allowed to buy firearms in the United States? Do my colleagues believe that a person on the terrorist watch list should be allowed to buy explosives in the United States? How about dirty bomb components? I don’t think there is any question about the fact that the vast majority of Americans would give is no. That is one of our amendments.

Do my colleagues think we should put more resources into protecting the United States through the Department of Homeland Security and through law enforcement, even local law enforcement, and the FBI? I think so. That is another one of our amendments.

A third amendment is going to change the effort and zero in on what we consider to be gaps in the law that allow would-be terrorists and other potential terrorists, I think to myself: How are we going to make sure that we can make that happen.

Mariela Shaker—an incredible story of a young girl who was growing up in the Homs section of Syria, whose parents were afraid that she was going to die from a bombing that was taking place. She applied and was accepted to go to a downtown college in Illinois, Monmouth College. She is a master violinist, a prodigy. She completed her degree there and now is at DePaul University working on a master’s degree in music—an amazing young woman. A terrorist? No, just a young women looking for safety and a future.

The stories go on and on. When I hear the statements made on the floor about potential terrorists, I think to myself: They haven’t met these families, they haven’t heard their stories, and if they did, they might reconsider.

I ask my colleagues to look at this bill that came over from the House. I think this personal certification by the head of the FBI, certifying every single person, and a certification by the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Homeland Security are just being put in the path of these people to slow them down and stop them again and again and again.

What have we said, not out of compassion or out of common sense, let’s address the things that will make America safer. Instead of zeroing in on a handful of Syrian refugees who are no threat to the United States, let’s look to those things that actually are a threat to the United States. Let’s not waste our time.

My colleagues believe that a person whose name is on the no-fly list, the terrorist suspect list, should be allowed to buy a firearm?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 3 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Do my colleagues believe that a person who is on the terrorist watch list should be allowed to buy firearms in the United States? Do my colleagues believe that a person on the terrorist watch list should be allowed to buy explosives in the United States? How about dirty bomb components? I don’t think there is any question about the fact that the vast majority of Americans would give is no. That is one of our amendments.

Do my colleagues think we should put more resources into protecting the United States through the Department of Homeland Security and through law enforcement, even local law enforcement, and the FBI? I think so. That is another one of our amendments.

A third amendment is going to change the effort and zero in on what we consider to be gaps in the law that allow would-be terrorists and other potential terrorists, I think to myself: How are we going to make sure that we can make that happen.

Mariela Shaker—an incredible story of a young girl who was growing up in the Homs section of Syria, whose parents were afraid that she was going to die from a bombing that was taking place. She applied and was accepted to go to a downtown college in Illinois, Monmouth College. She is a master violinist, a prodigy. She completed her degree there and now is at DePaul University working on a master’s degree in music—an amazing young woman. A terrorist? No, just a young women looking for safety and a future.

The stories go on and on. When I hear the statements made on the floor about potential terrorists, I think to myself: They haven’t met these families, they haven’t heard their stories, and if they did, they might reconsider.

I ask my colleagues to look at this bill that came over from the House. I think this personal certification by the head of the FBI, certifying every single person, and a certification by the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Homeland Security are just being put in the path of these people to slow them down and stop them again and again and again.

What have we said, not out of compassion or out of common sense, let’s address the things that will make America safer. Instead of zeroing in on a handful of Syrian refugees who are no threat to the United States, let’s look to those things that actually are a threat to the United States. Let’s not waste our time.

My colleagues believe that a person whose name is on the no-fly list, the terrorist suspect list, should be allowed to buy a firearm?
States through the refugee program. Again, it has been verified that this is an entry point for possible terrorists.

Fact No. 4: The horrible and coordinated assault in Paris last fall, in the words of President Francois Hollande of France, was financed and organized in Belgium, perpetrated on our soil with French complicity." And a fact related to that is that at least one of those terrorists got in through the refugee resettlement program there.

Fact No. 5: Journalist Director James Comey has testified that the Federal Government doesn't have the ability to properly and fully vet 10,000 or more Syrian refugees. Recently, during a hearing before the House Committee on Homeland Security, he stated:

We can only query against that which we have collected. And so if someone has never made a ripple in the pond in Syria in a way that would get their identity or their interest in our database until the cows come home, but there will be nothing to show up because we have no record of them.

Fact No. 6: The "Reflections on the Tenth Anniversary of the 9/11 Commission Report," released in 2014, states that "it is unclear whether the United States and its allies have sufficient resources in place to monitor foreign fighters' activities in Syria (and neighboring Iraq) and to track their travel back to their home countries."

Those are documented facts, which make perfectly clear what common sense should suggest. This refugee resettlement program is a vulnerability, and we must take action to protect our homeland.

To do this, I have introduced a very strong bill to require a suspension of admissions of Syrian refugees until the Obama administration properly evaluates the current program, and ensures that it has in place to relocate them here and to certify not just in the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State but also with intelligence and law enforcement agencies that these are adequate. My bill has seven cosponsors. I plan to continue to move it, hopefully, through an amendment process related to this bill so we can make sure we have proper, adequate reforms in place.

So that is today's vote in simple, straightforward terms in terms of the real danger. We can't properly vet all of these refugees right now. This is documented. This is from the experts. We need to put proper measures in place to continue combating this flood of refugees. We need to protect American families, secure our borders, and keep out all terrorists. Voting for the SAFE Act and voting to put it on the floor and engaging in this debate is an important step in doing that. For that reason, I urge a positive vote to put this important measure on the floor and to pass it.

Thank you, Madam President. I yield the floor.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order of business be suspended to allow an amendment process related to this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. Ayotte). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, last week I was proud to host Hassan Jabber as my guest at the State of the Union and to address the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, founded in 1971 in Dearborn, MI. ACCESS is the largest Arab American human services nonprofit in the United States, providing health and wellness, education, employment, and youth services in its local communities, including support for refugees settling in America.

Hassan is a community leader and just one example of the many individuals in Dearborn who are working to help build a vibrant Arab American community, including some of the most patriotic people I know whose contributions to our culture and economy are invaluable. That is why I am so concerned about the legislation we will be debating later today, which would impose significant barriers on our efforts to assist refugees fleeing violence and persecution in Iraq and Syria. I am a member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Last November we held a hearing on refugee resettlement. We heard about the strict security checks involved in the Refugee Admissions Program, which could take 18 to 24 months.

The Refugee Admissions Program subjects refugees to the highest level of security checks of any category of traveler coming into the United States. They are screened by the National Counterterrorism Center, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense, as well as other agencies. Refugees considered for resettlement to the United States are subjected to biometric and biographic checks, a personal interview, all of which are conducted while the refugees are overseas, outside of the United States. Refugees are even required to repay loans to the International Organization for Migration to cover the cost of transportation and medical screening.

At the same hearing last November, we also heard how the Refugee Admissions Program prioritizes the most vulnerable refugees: widows with children, victims of torture and trauma, persecuted religious minorities, and those who face death threats if they return home. These cases are our country's top priority for resettlement. I was there at the end of last year when I had an opportunity to travel to the Middle East with Senator Murphy and meet members of this vulnerable population. Visiting the Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan, I saw the scale of the crisis that the world faces.

Talking to just some of the over 80,000 refugees at that camp, who are only a small fraction of the 11.6 million people who have been displaced from their homes over the past 4½ years during the brutal civil war in Syria, it was clear that none of those refugees were there by choice. Before anything else, they just wanted to return home.

In the end, however, returning home is not something that is going to happen. They are not going to be able to return to the life they had before. They certainly did not want to have the very dangerous journey to escape violence and security by going far away. Unfortunately, the possibility of their safe return is unlikely at any time in the near future. They struggle to survive every day, and they persevere. Many have been vetted and identified as people who are qualified to resettle as refugees in countries like ours because they simply can't return home.

The refugees I met are struggling to live on 50 cents a day to buy food and have only one propane bottle to provide cooking fuel for an entire month. Unfortunately, most of that aid is slotted to end in the next couple of months. The people in the camps live on the edge of having nothing, and they rely only on humanitarian aid on a day-to-day basis. They are thankful, but in the end they are living in limbo, waiting and hoping for an interview with a U.S. official.

Today, at the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing we focused on ISIS's goals and ideology. We heard from experts that the United States should continue to welcome refugees. Proposals to block refugees based on their religious beliefs plays into the narrative that the United States and Muslims across the globe are in direct conflict. We heard that those who have left ISIS territory describe it as "a living hell," and if we do not accept refugees, it harms our standing in the world and actually will weaken our national security.

The safety and security of the American people is always my top priority, but policies which alienate and divide, targeted at victims of terror and violence, do not support that mission. I am hopeful that this body will focus our efforts on the very real threat posed by terrorism and extremism, not on imposing unnecessary barriers that will prevent us from assisting the victims fleeing violence. I hope that we can stay true to the American values that make our country great.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for agreement be suspended to allow an amendment process related to this bill.

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

OUR "WE THE PEOPLE" DEMOCRACY

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I rise today to kick off a series of
speeches where I will come to the floor on a regular basis to address issues affecting Americans and propose ways to solve the challenges we face. These speeches will cover a variety of topics, but they will all link back to the fundamental theme of our "we the people" democracy.

In the summer of 1787, a group came together of patriots, farmers, and scholars. They gathered in Philadelphia, and after 4 months of fierce debate and enduring compromise, they agreed upon principles and a system of governance. They signed their names to a document, our Constitution, which has guided our Nation's progress for over two centuries. They began that Constitution, that key document, with three simple words on parchment—"we the people" and with that they launched our experience in democratic governance.

The Founders wrote this phrase in beautiful script, 10 times the size of the rest of the words in the declaration, as if to say 'this is what it is all about, this is what America will be about—governance for "we the people."'

They did not say at the start of this document "we the titans of industry." They did not say "we the rich and powerful." They said "we the people." As President Lincoln summarized, the genius of our governance is that it is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

With this guiding light America has been a great nation. Because of our "we the people" principle, we insisted on a better, fairer, and freer nation for all citizens—because we the people demanded that all Americans deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness, because we the people never stopped reaching for greater prosperity and growth to the benefit of all.

In order to address the challenges of our time we must recall to mind this "we the people" spirit. We must set aside politics in favor of progress. We must reform a broken system that favors the few at the expense of the many. We must end the promise of commerce. They did not say "we the titans of industry." They did not say "we the rich and powerful." They said "we the people." As President Lincoln summarized, the genius of our governance is that it is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

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The bottom line is that we have to make a choice about the kind of country we want to live in. I don't choose a country in which the rules are made by and for the very few at the top. I choose a country embedded in the first three words of our Constitution, where decisions are made by and for the people of our Nation. I choose a country that honors these Founding principles, that comes together to tackle the big challenges, that works not for the 1 percent or the 0.1 percent but for 100 percent of Americans. Let us reclaim our "we the people" democracy, our "we the people" vision, and set our Nation back on track.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:26 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

AMERICAN SECURITY AGAINST FOREIGN ENEMIES ACT OF 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Defense of the Senate. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Motion to proceed to H.R. 4038, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 300, H.R. 4038, a bill to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be conducted of certain aliens as refugees, for and other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the majority and the minority leaders or their designees.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is unfortunate that the fear and xenophobia being peddled by some Republican candidates for President is now being given time on the Senate floor.

Instead of solving the real problems facing Americans—like the student debt crisis or our need for energy independence—or responding to real threats to our national security—like our failure to track visa overstays or prevent terrorists from buying guns—today we are debating a strawman inspired by Donald Trump's baseless rhetoric.

The bill the Republican leader is asking us to consider will not make America safer. In fact, it is a dangerous distraction that plays into the hands of the ISIS propaganda machine.

Instead of demonizing refugees, who are the most thoroughly screened group of people who enter the United States, we should take up and pass the Defeat ISIS and Protect and Secure the United States Act of 2015. That bill of

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is un

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The Yeas and nays are as follows:

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

The Yeas and nays are as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Leg.]

YEAS—55

NAYS—43

Alexander
Ayotte
Brown
Barrasso
Blumenthal
Burr
Capito
Cassidy
Coats
Cooney
Collins
Cotton
Cornyn
Cruz
Daines
Enzi
Ernst

Baldwin
Bennet
Risik
Hirono
Booker
King
Brown
Klobuchar
Carper
Carpenter
Coons
Donnelly
Durbin
Feinstein
Franken
Graham

Gillibrand
Heinrich
Hirono
Johnson
Katz
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Markey
McCaskill
Menendez
Merkley
Mikulski
Murphy
Murray
Nelson

Nelson
Portman
Perdue
Portman
Risch
Roberts
Ronson
Rubio
Sasse
Scott
Saxton
Schrader
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Vitter
Wicker

Water Pollution Control Act.

The Senate proceeded to reconsider the joint resolution.

The Yeas and nays are as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Leg.]

YEAS—55

NAYS—43

Alexander
Ayotte
Brown
Barrasso
Blumenthal
Burr
Capito
Cassidy
Coats
Cooney
Collins
Cotton
Cornyn
Cruz
Daines
Enzi
Ernst

Baldwin
Bennet
Risik
Hirono
Booker
King
Brown
Klobuchar
Carper
Carpenter
Coons
Donnelly
Durbin
Feinstein
Franken
Graham

Gillibrand
Heinrich
Hirono
Johnson
Katz
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Markey
McCaskill
Menendez
Merkley
Mikulski
Murphy
Murray
Nelson

Nelson
Portman
Perdue
Portman
Risch
Roberts
Ronson
Rubio
Sasse
Scott
Saxton
Schrader
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Vitter
Wicker

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE SECRETARY OF ENGIN

Mr. MCCONNELL. The veto motion has been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 300, H.R. 4038, an act to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be completed prior to the admission of certain aliens as refugees, and for other purposes.


The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 300, H.R. 4038, an act to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be completed prior to the admission of certain aliens as refugees, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Leg.]

YEAS—55

NAYS—43

Alexander
Ayotte
Brown
Barrasso
Blumenthal
Burr
Capito
Cassidy
Coats
Cooney
Collins
Cotton
Cornyn
Cruz
Daines
Enzi
Ernst

Baldwin
Bennet
Risik
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Graham

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Heinrich
Hirono
Johnson
Katz
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Markey
McCaskill
Menendez
Merkley
Mikulski
Murphy
Murray
Nelson

Nelson
Portman
Perdue
Portman
Risch
Roberts
Ronson
Rubio
Sasse
Scott
Saxton
Schrader
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Vitter
Wicker

Providing for Congressional Disapproval of a Rule Submitted by the Secretary of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency—Veto—Continued

Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. President, I call for regular order with respect to the veto message on S.J. Res. 22.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The veto message is the pending business.

The Senate proceeded to reconsider the joint resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk on the veto message.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion has been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to close debate be waived.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to close debate be waived.

The yeas and nays are as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Leg.]

YEAS—55

NAYS—43

Alexander
Ayotte
Brown
Barrasso
Blumenthal
Burr
Capito
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Cruz
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Heinrich
Hirono
Johnson
Katz
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Markey
McCaskill
Menendez
Merkley
Mikulski
Murphy
Murray
Nelson

Nelson
Portman
Perdue
Portman
Risch
Roberts
Ronson
Rubio
Sasse
Scott
Saxton
Schrader
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Vitter
Wicker

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

Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Without objection, it is so ordered.
Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, 6 months ago, world powers reached an agreement to constrain Iran's nuclear program and to give us a path forward toward constraining Iran's nuclear ambitions. While the international community has taken some positive steps to implement this agreement and to limit Iran's nuclear program and while Iran has recently taken positive steps to observe and to implement this agreement, we must do much more to strictly enforce this deal and aggressively push back against any behavior outside of the deal's parameters. If we don't, this nuclear agreement may not survive into next year.

This past weekend was an eventful one for U.S. foreign policy and, in particular, the policy toward Iran. Saturday marked implementation day of this nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

Implementation day is important because it means that the International Atomic Energy Agency, or the IAEA, has certified that Iran has completed a whole series of tasks required as part of the nuclear agreement. The four most important of those tasks are these:

First, it has shipped 12 tons of enriched uranium—nearly its entire stockpile, which took Iran a decade to amass—out of the country to a secure facility supervised by the IAEA around the clock.

Second, it means Iran has reduced the number of its functioning centrifuges—centrifuges it uses to enrich uranium—by nearly two-thirds, or from roughly 19,000 to a little more than 6,000, and it has accepted longer-term limits on developing, testing, and deploying new centrifuges.

Third, it means Iran has presented the IAEA with unprecedented 24/7 access to monitor all of its nuclear-related facilities that is not only enriching facilities. That is uranium mines, uranium mills, and centrifuge production facilities—every known and declared site within Iran connected to its nuclear program. This level of access far exceeds previous IAEA authorities in countries suspected of trying to develop a nuclear weapon.

Fourth—and to me, in ways most importantly—Iran has filled the core of its Arak heavy water reactor, pictured here, with concrete, permanently disabling the most likely short-term path that Iran had to producing weapons-grade plutonium. Had Iran proceeded and had Iran been able to produce significant quantities of weapons-grade plutonium, our ability to intervene and to prevent their march toward a nuclear weapon would have been significantly harder.

Plutonium is one of the most lethal toxins known to man, and any attack on a heavy water reactor producing plutonium would have had horrible consequences, not just in Iran but throughout the entire region. So blocking Iran's short-term pathway through uranium enrichment and blocking through plutonium enrichment is a significant step forward and does reflect significant restraints on Iran's nuclear weapons program.

As a result of the conditions on this deal that we just referenced, the time it would take to break out and we would need to have to have access to uranium fuel for a bomb has been extended significantly from just 2 months to 3 months to a year or more. But these positive developments—and there are substantial risks, principally among them is the tens of billions of dollars in sanctions relief that Iran will now receive for complying with the terms of the deal. Tens of billions of dollars of Iranian assets, frozen in bank accounts around the world through an American-led international sanctions effort will now be released.

That is why America and our international partners must continue to aggressively enforce the terms of the deal and to make sure that Iran remains in compliance with every aspect of the JCPOA. Our work in this area is more urgent and more difficult than it has been at any point before. We can be confident that in the coming months and years the Iranians will test the boundaries of the deal and will probe our every response. Indeed, they already have.

If we fail to respond more swiftly and more vigorously to these Iranian provocations, Iran will nibble away at the deal's restrictions and gradually undermine the international coalition that put it together. Every minor violation that we permit, every violation that we don't enforce, will erode America's credibility and gives Iran tacit permission to continue its breaches of the agreement.

Given this stark, difficult reality, our efforts to deter Iranian aggression and to maintain the momentum to just enforcing the nuclear deal, or the JCPOA. Rather, our efforts must be part of a coherent, unified regional strategy to contain Iran and to push back on its bad behavior in the Middle East, a task made even more difficult because of its newfound access to assets previously frozen. That comprehensive effort to counter and contain Iran must include a willingness to take unilateral action by imposing new sanctions on Iran for destabilizing actions, both inside and outside the parameters of the nuclear agreement.

That brings me to the second important development of this past weekend—the designation of additional sanctions to punish Iran for its ballistic missile tests. Last fall, in clear violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, Iran conducted two ballistic missile tests; one on October 10 and one on November 21. Since then, I and many of my colleagues have been calling on the Obama administration to punish Iran for these disruptive, dangerous, and blatantly illegal actions.

Over the weekend, the administration took action by designating for sanctions 11 additional individuals and business entities involved in supporting Iran's ballistic missile program. These sanctions follow a series of previously taken by the Treasury Department last fall to sanction other Iranians, other Iranian-linked individuals and organizations for a litany of other dangerous and illegal activities: supporting Hezbollah officials and agents who threaten our vital ally, Israel; supplying financial and material aid to the Houthi rebels in Yemen; providing military support for the murderous Assad regime in Syria; and the list goes on. It is important, on a bipartisan basis, to remind our allies throughout the world that American-led sanctions against Iran—for its human rights violations, for its ballistic missile program, for its support of terrorism—remain in effect and will be vigorously enforced.

From conducting these missile tests to supporting terrorism, to continuing to deny the very existence of some basic human rights, Iran has shown time and again it will continue to flout international rules and values. The United States must continue to maintain its unilateral sanctions in these areas, and we must not hesitate to use these authorities—not just to punish Iran for its illegal behavior but to send a clear signal to our allies in the region, throughout the world, and to Tehran that we are serious about holding Iran accountable.

Of course, implementing implementation day and the imposition of sanctions and sanction designations for Iran's illegal ballistic missile tests weren't the only significant developments of the new year.

We also learned this weekend that America would soon be able to welcome five innocent Americans long held unlawfully by Iran. These Americans should never have been held in the first place and their release was long overdue. The negotiations to release these five Americans occurred outside the parameters of the JCPOA.

While we are grateful for their safe return, this release also raises some serious questions. We still don't know how Iran top officials to all of us, including Robert Levinson and his whereabouts. We don't know the status of Siamak Namazi, an Iranian-American energy industry executive arrested in October. It is my hope there are equally ceaseless efforts by this administration to bring them home.

We have to ask: What did we give up? What were the terms of the agreement?
How did we make possible this release? A key part that is public is that while none of the 7 Iranians released were convicted of violence, they were nonetheless convicted of criminal acts, and 14 Iranians who may have been convicted of less serious crimes in the past have been released. We must remember, though, that despite the limits imposed by the JCPOA, Iran continues to destabilize the Middle East and undermine America’s goals for the region. Iran’s behavior since the JCPOA was signed has made it crystal clear that Iran is neither America’s friend nor ally. We must remain suspicious and distrustful of the Iranian regime.

In addition to its ballistic missile test referenced before, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard has conducted dangerous military operations near U.S. ships, most recently threatening the safety of American sailors by conducting a live-fire exercise barely a mile from the aircraft carrier, the USS Harry S. Truman.

Iran also detained American sailors in the Arabian Gulf last week, and it did not treat them in a manner consistent with naval forces rendering assistance at sea. I am pleased our sailors were released safely. Iran did use the images of those sailors for propaganda purposes in an attempt to send a signal to the world about its capacity to sow chaos in the region. We must not turn a blind eye to provocations by Iran against our allies by conducting such exercises. As part of this effort, we must reassert America’s presence as one of its regional leaders.

We must step up our military presence in the region to make it clear to Iran that we will continue to pursue our interests, and we will counter Iran’s malign activities. Again, to remain distrustful of Iran and push back on the regional ambitions I think is the only path toward a safer, stronger Middle East and an American presence as one of its regional leaders.

No one should mistake Tehran’s compliance with the terms of the nuclear agreement for a broader willingness to respect human rights and engage with the international community in the rules-based order that we have helped lead since the World War II. I have seen nothing to indicate that the regime in Tehran cares about the well-being of the Iranian people, much less the opinion of the world community. In October, for example, two Iranian poets each received a 10-year sentence and 20 lashes for kissing members of the opposite sex and shaking their hands. That same month an Iranian award-winning filmmaker was sentenced to 6 years in prison and 200 lashes on the charge of insulting sanctities. The filmmaker was making a documentary about an Iranian artist, based in Europe, who had been accused of blasphemy.

Nearly two-thirds of the 12,000 candidates who ran in this month’s parliamentary elections recently withdrew or were disqualified by Iran’s Guardian Council. Iran’s Supreme Leader said: “Americans have set their eyes covetously on elections, and the election of Iran will act contrary to our enemies’ will, whether it be in elections or on other issues, and as before we will punch them in the mouth.” These are not the actions or the statements of a state that respects the rights of its people or seeks friendship with the United States in the near future.

Just 2 weeks ago I returned from a trip to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel, and Austria. I am grateful to my colleague from New York, Senator Gillibrand, and to Senator John McCain of which a number of the meetings I held included important meetings with nuclear inspectors from the IAEA. We met with their leadership headquartered in Vienna and had meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Minister of Defense Ya’alon, and Turkish President Erdogan, as well as other vital regional leaders. The message my colleagues and I heard from these leaders was simple, powerful, and clear: America must reassure our allies that we will not waver in our commitment to push back on Iran, its nuclear program, and its destabilizing actions in the region. Our partners, our allies—and Iran—must know and believe through our words and our actions that we are serious about preserving the long-term stability of the Middle East and that Iran—a revolutionary regime—does not share our values or that goal.

As part of this effort, we must reassert our support for our vital ally, Israel. As the administration negotiates a new, long-term memorandum of understanding to provide Israel with the security assistance it needs to protect itself in the most dangerous neighborhood on Earth, we must insist that joint U.S. and Israeli strategic planning includes protection of Israel from threats it faces from neighboring instability in Syria. We must not allow Israel to be attacked by Iranian proxies, such as Hezbollah, and the Iranians would not work closely with the Israelis to share intelligence and intercept any weapons shipments from Iran to its regional proxies.

If we fail to push back on Iran and enforce the terms of the nuclear deal, not only will the agreement collapse, but our efforts to show the world that diplomacy actually works will be dealt a dangerous blow as well.

In the weeks and months to come, I call on the administration to do more to push back on Iran, and I call on my colleagues—Republicans and Democrats alike—to come together, to be engaged, and to remain focused on enforcing the terms of this nuclear agreement, on containing Iran, and on deterring their bad behavior, their support for terrorism, their support for human rights violations, and their relentless efforts to develop and advance ballistic missile capability.

As I said before, the Iranian Government has long paid close attention to everything America says and does. It will certainly pay even more attention today. Never has it been more urgent than today. As the regime gains greater access to money and resources, we must not take our eye off of Iran. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT OF OFFICE, The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, as the President of Officer knows, throughout last year’s session I would come to the Senate floor each week and talk about Iran. I would say that the world was in session. We did nearly 30 of those in the 30 weeks that the Senate was in session, maybe skipping one or two. It is 2016. We are in a new year, and I am back for the 2016 version of Waste of the Week.

The reason I am doing this is because I am trying to bring to the attention of my colleagues and the American people the fact that the government is not spending our hard-earned tax dollars in the most efficient and effective way that they could. By highlighting these various uses of expenditures in Washington and abuses of that spending, we alert them to the fact that there are significant savings that can be made.

In 2015, we totaled up nearly $30 billion of demonstrated examples of waste, fraud, and abuse—money that was spent for no purpose whatsoever or for a purpose that certainly didn’t qualify for the use of taxpayer dollars and the abuse of those dollars and the fraud that went along with it. This is just scratching the surface.

The President of Officer was very much a part of this and knows that since 2010 there has been a significant effort, much of it a bipartisan effort, to try to deal with the long-range plunge into evermore spending and evermore debt that is plaguing our country, holding down our ability to grow as an economy, and will have long-term negative consequences on generations here, and particularly on future generations.

Whether it was Simpson-Bowles or Domenici-Rivlin or whether it was the Gang of 12, the Committee of 6 or the Vitter committee, many efforts were made to try to work with the administration to address the long-term problems. Eventually, each one of those failed. I am not here to impose blame on anyone. It would be easy to do. It is a very difficult problem working with the administration, and sometimes we have differences between the parties here, but there was general recognition—universal recognition—that we couldn’t continue down the same road but that we must do something.
path of excessive spending, more than we received in revenues, year after year at a frightening pace to ever greater debt.

When this administration took office, the national debt—accumulated well over the course of America's existence as a country—that debt has nearly doubled in the 8 years this administration has been in office and will virtually double before that term is up. It is unsustainable. The Congressional Budget Office—a neutral agency that has nothing to do with Republicans or Democrats or politics. It simply gives us the numbers and the numbers tell the story. Those numbers are frightening when we look at the degree to which we continue to plunge into debt.

The Congressional Budget Office just released its latest report, which said coming deficits will be more than 20 percent larger than previously forecast—just last August. Depending on some of the actions taken here in Congress regarding spending, the calculation has to be changed, and it is going to be 20 percent more than what they had projected just a few months ago. We are looking at a trillion-dollar deficits on the horizon.

In my mind, here is the most startling of the 10 recommendations and notices to us: In 10 years, 99 percent of all revenue that comes in to the Federal Government—the collection of everyone’s taxes and all the money that flows into Washington through user fees, excise fees, withholding taxes from our paycheck, the taxes we pay either every April or quarterly taxes, every tax out there accumulating, 99 percent will go to mandatory spending and net interest spending.

If you are for a stronger defense, if you are for better research at the National Institutes of Health, if you are for funding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if your interest is education, social welfare, if you are looking at any of the hundreds, if not thousands, of programs that various interests have here, if 99 percent of the revenues coming in are going to things we have no control over—mandatory spending, which is Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid—essentially only 1 percent is left to divide up among everything else the Federal Government does, the collection of everyone’s taxes and all the money that flows into Washington through user fees, excise fees, withholding taxes from our paycheck, the taxes we pay either every April or quarterly taxes, every tax out there accumulating, 99 percent will go to mandatory spending and net interest spending.

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the U.S. Embassy in 2014 in Kabul would have cost $1.8 million and little or nothing if they had bunked with troops at a military base.

The IG also noted that poor oversight and the complete lack of coordination—evident throughout that effort—where have we heard about Federal programs with a complete lack of coordination with other programs to see if there is duplication, such as Social Security disability and the unemployment insurance as an example? That has not been provided, he said.

He is still investigating all of this, but what we are going to do today is take that $150 million price tag for these Afghanistan villas to the taxpayer, and we are going to add that.

By the way, I have a picture of the villas. I can see why people might want to live in something like this rather than an Army base. But this is tax dollars going over to Afghanistan. We have a mission over there to accomplish. I don’t know—this could be in Washington, DC, or this could be in Indianapolis, IN. They are pretty nice digs. Is it really necessary to spend that kind of money when other facilities are available? The services and food are available to maintain those and the security is within a Department of Defense military base? Do we have to go to this level of support with taxpayer dollars?

We are $150 million to our ever-growing list of waste, and our total is now well over $130 billion of cost. That is this week’s waste of the week.

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Mr. President. I also wish to talk about the Syrian refugee issue. I had the opportunity to spend some time in Jordan, as a member of the Intelligence Committee, and in Turkey looking at the situation as it exists in Syria. I also spent time in Italy and Greece relative to the humanitarian crisis that is taking place, with literally hundreds of thousands of people who are fleeing Iraq, northern Iraq, and fleeing Syria because it is a war-torn area, and their migration and all the issues involved with that migration and the implications and consequences it is having on Europe.

It is an issue here in the United States, resettlement of refugees. It is overwhelming. These countries cannot even affirmative to the humanitarian crisis that is taking place, with literally hundreds of thousands of people who are fleeing Iraq, northern Iraq, and fleeing Syria because it is a war-torn area, and their migration and all the issues involved with that migration and the implications and consequences it is having on Europe.

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I think the issue we just voted on here unfortunately fell short. We didn’t get support from our colleagues across the aisle and didn’t have the necessary votes to move it through. The House has already passed, and that is to provide a suspension of time to comply with what our FBI Director has said needs to be done so that we can ensure that people in this refugee flow who are coming to the United States, admitted to America under the administration’s plan are truly war-torn refugees and not representing a terrorist threat to the American public. The FBI Director and our intelligence agencies have said we don’t have the necessary tools in place to be able to ascertain this, and until we do, we cannot guarantee that these refugees do not include people who are not coming for asylum reasons but are connected in one way or another to terrorists. I thought it was a very reasonable thing to do to try to secure for Americans and assure them that we are not simply opening the gates here to terrorist access, to pause and get these screening procedures in place before we allow this to happen.

We just had a vote within an hour or so and came up short, which is unfortunate, and we did not gain the support we needed to get the necessary votes from our colleagues. So the effort the House has made once again dies in the Senate because while we had virtually every Republican vote, we couldn’t get any other votes to get to the necessary level to take up the legislation and move forward. There may be another attempt to do that.

After going and looking and talking to U.N. associate officials, talking to our government officials, talking to officials from these various countries and particularly those entry points from northern Africa that come through Italy from Greece which comes from Syria and Iraq, the conclusion I came to was that this flow, which is now well over 1 million people—temporarily slowed here because of the weather, and it will start up again in the spring when it warms up—is overwhelming Europe. You don’t have to watch too much cable news or read too much of a newspaper to see what is happening in Europe with the massive inflow of refugees, asylum seekers, and the huge number of people who are not abiding by the laws, overwhelming the system.

As some open-arms welcome, as Germany was under the Chancellor’s proclamation to “bring them here, and we will take care of them,” even that is now under question in terms of Germany’s capability of doing that. A number of other countries, including Denmark and Hungary, are basically saying: We can’t handle all of this. It is just overwhelming us. The social and political debate of this is actually a great political, as well as a financial, threat to Europe, and we have seen evidence of that. No one is really talking about a possible alternative that can deal with this problem.

Several months ago, I came to the Senate floor and basically said: I think I have a better solution that is perhaps even more financially feasible. My solution basically is to say: Why don’t we spend the money to provide these people safe havens either within their country or simply across the border of other countries. Turkey and Jordan are taking in millions of refugees, but they are overwhelmed. There is a precedent here in terms of providing people haven’s for these people either within their country or simply across the border of other countries.

I was serving in the Senate at the time of the Balkan war, and the brutality there was equal to some of the brutality that is taking place in Syria. It was a desperate situation, but through the U.N. agencies for refugee relief and the use of NATO to provide security, we created, as a coalition of nations, safe havens for people in the Balkans. There were a few mistakes, but in the end it worked very significantly.

These people wanted to go back to their homes. They wanted to stay citizens of their country. They had hundreds of years of history through the line of their families in these countries, and they didn’t want to try to move to another country. I think they all have to learn different skills in order to assimilate in other countries any more than we would want to move our people out to another country if we were in that situation.

We have safe havens and having NATO provide the security to keep these safe havens from being attacked or misused and by providing a coalition of financial support and enough humanitarian support through the United Nations and through the world’s nations, I said this is a better way to handle it, and we succeeded in that effort. So the precedent is there, and I thought: Why not use the same model for Syria? It solves the immigration issue because those people are housed in a humanitarian way, with NATO providing for their safety, which is what I suggested. After all, Turkey is part of NATO. It is a mission in which NATO would address the problem in Europe, where most of the NATO nations are housed. Obviously, the United States would take part in it.

It provides a financial situation to the issue. I haven’t been able to calculate this, but the cost of providing these safe havens can’t exceed the cost of all the transfer, movement, assimilation into the culture, training, education, learning the language, and everything that has to be provided for those who are going to foreign nations from their homeland.

So once again, I am bringing this suggestion to my colleagues’ attention, and, hopefully, to the attention of NATO and other countries that are caught up in this refugee problem and asking: Why don’t we reopen the discussion and debate about what the cost would be, what it would take to accomplish it in order to create these safe havens in areas close to or within the
borders of the countries from which they are coming from? It addresses a multitude of problems that are overwhelming the capability of European nations and have created a political storm of opposition both in Europe as well as in the United States, and it legitimately gives those refugees safe harbor, humanitarian support, and housing conditions. It gives them food, water, and humanitarian and medical support at their safe haven rather than have them flowing into other countries.

So, once again, I am calling for this. Germany estimates that last year alone the cost of the refugee crisis was 21 billion euros, and in dollars it would be even more. Italy spent 620 million euros in 2014 and more than 800 million euros in 2015. Individual islands in Greece spent between 1 and 1.5 billion euros last year, and they can’t afford it. We all know that Greece can’t begin to afford this. They have said: We have enough energy problems for taking care of our own people, let alone the massive influx of refugees. Sometimes they get 10,000 refugees a day in their country who say: We are here, we want to eat, we want a place to sleep, and we want care.

Greece is saying: We can’t even take care of our own, let alone the refugees.

It is creating tremendous tension and tremendous political consequences for many European nations. The EU allocated 500 million euros for the crisis last year, which is far too short. But in that context, this money can be used to address the problem of funding for these safe havens, avoiding all of the cultural, political, and social dynamics that are a part of this refugee flow and creating so many problems there.

I have kind of given an outline here of what I think we ought to seriously consider as we are looking at the refugee crisis. For those who say America is not a welcoming country, that is not true.

My mother is an immigrant. I am the son of an immigrant. She came here as a young child with her sisters and brothers the legal way. My mother and father learned the language and worked hard so that we could get a good education and assimilate into the United States.

But now we simply don’t have the capability. It is not wise to simply open our borders, to say: Come one, come all. Maybe that was possible before ISIL, ISIS, Al Qaeda, and these other terrorist groups were formed, but today we have a major national security issue combined with the ability to assimilate refugees from other countries.

The security issue alone puts us in a position where we just simply can’t provide the kind of security for the American people without screening and background checks because ISIL said: We are doing this. Look at California and these other places where they are inspired over the Internet or injected into our country. The FBI Director says: We are overwhelmed in terms of trying to keep track of people whom we suspect are trying to do harm to the American people. I think because of that issue alone, as well as the other issues involved here, this is a model we ought to really look into and to the European model.

Once again, I am calling for that, and I will talk more about that as we go forward.

I am now finished with my two presentations. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RIGHT TO LIFE FOR THE UNBORN

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, Kansas celebrates a rich history of protecting man-made laws that deny natural rights. We have protested many things over a long period of time, and our history is significant in that regard. After years of bloodshed leading to the Civil War, Kansas was born a free State. Though we lament the use of any violence, residents of our State have acted on the firm conviction that human beings, regardless of their stage or state in life, could not be regarded as property.

We take pride in the fact that one of the first sit-ins of the civil rights movement took place at the Dockum Drugstore in Wichita, KS, leading the way for peaceful protests in the struggle for equality.

Today I wish to call attention to a somber anniversary in our Nation’s history that will be observed this week. Forty-three years ago, the Supreme Court determined an unborn child has no guaranteed right to life under the Constitution, paving the way to destroy the lives of 57 million unborn children since 1973.

Many Kansans, most of them very young, will continue a decades-long tradition of standing up for the civil rights of an unprotected class of people as they come to Washington, DC. With their chaperones, they will comprise one of the Nation’s largest groups attending the annual March for Life.

There is no other time when it is rarely warm, and, as is forecast for this Friday’s march, it will be snowy, cold, and probably very miserable. Despite the elements—despite the weather—when the hundreds of thousands of youth walk down Constitution Avenue past the other people at the Supreme Court, they give witness to the sanctity of human life from the moment of conception. They protest abortion providers receiving taxpayer dollars. They object to government policies that violate freedom of conscience.

These Kansans have made a 20-hour bus ride and will yet again brave cold weather to demonstrate their commitment to the right to life—a right that those of us in positions of power have an obligation to protect.

When visiting with these young advocates, I have been struck by the clarity with which they march. Motivated by a love for their fellow human beings and a love to come to Washington, DC, not to condemn, but rather to affirm that all life is sacred and to encourage a broader realization of that in our Nation.

Every opportunity they have they use to educate and to encourage a point of view that protects life. As other times in our struggle for civil rights in our country, they will make progress to pursue and secure the right to life, and none of those things have happened as quickly as we would like.

As we work to expedite the day when the unborn are protected under law, I welcome to our Nation’s capital all Kansans, as well as the hundreds of thousands more who will join them as they search for, as government begins with the first step, and these young Kansans can be certain their march will not be in vain.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

PRICE SPIKES IN DECADES-OLD PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise today with my friend and colleague, the Senator from Missouri, Mrs. McCaskill, to inform our colleague, the Senator from Missouri, that issue alone, as well as the other issues involved here, this is a model we ought to seriously consider as we are looking at the refugee crisis. For those who say America is not a welcoming country, that is not true.

My mother is an immigrant. I am the son of an immigrant. She came here as a young child with her sisters and brothers the legal way. My mother and father learned the language and worked hard so that we could get a good education and assimilate into the United States.

But now we simply don’t have the capability. It is not wise to simply open our borders, to say: Come one, come all. Maybe that was possible before ISIL, ISIS, Al Qaeda, and these other terrorist groups were formed, but today we have a major national security issue combined with the ability to assimilate refugees from other countries.

The security issue alone puts us in a position where we just simply can’t provide the kind of security for the American people without screening and background checks because ISIL said: We are doing this. Look at California and these other places where they are inspired over the Internet or injected into our country. The FBI Director says: We are overwhelmed in terms of trying to keep track of people whom we suspect are trying to do harm to the American people. I think because of that issue alone, as well as the other issues involved here, this is a model we ought to really look into and to the European model.

Once again, I am calling for that, and I will talk more about that as we go forward.

I am now finished with my two presentations. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RIGHT TO LIFE FOR THE UNBORN

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, Kansas celebrates a rich history of protecting man-made laws that deny natural rights. We have protested many things over a long period of time, and our history is significant in that regard. After years of bloodshed leading to the Civil War, Kansas was born a free State. Though we lament the use of any violence, residents of our State have acted on the firm conviction that human beings, regardless of their stage or state in life, could not be regarded as property.

We take pride in the fact that one of the first sit-ins of the civil rights movement took place at the Dockum Drugstore in Wichita, KS, leading the way for peaceful protests in the struggle for equality.

Today I wish to call attention to a somber anniversary in our Nation’s history that will be observed this week. Forty-three years ago, the Supreme Court determined an unborn child has no guaranteed right to life under the Constitution, paving the way to destroy the lives of 57 million unborn children since 1973.

Many Kansans, most of them very young, will continue a decades-long tradition of standing up for the civil rights of an unprotected class of people as they come to Washington, DC. With their chaperones, they will comprise one of the Nation’s largest groups attending the annual March for Life.

There is no other time when it is rarely warm, and, as is forecast for this Friday’s march, it will be snowy, cold, and probably very miserable. Despite the elements—despite the weather—when the hundreds of thousands of youth walk down Constitution Avenue past the other people at the Supreme Court, they give witness to the sanctity of human life from the moment of conception. They protest abortion providers receiving taxpayer dollars. They object to government policies that violate freedom of conscience.

These Kansans have made a 20-hour bus ride and will yet again brave cold weather to demonstrate their commitment to the right to life—a right that those of us in positions of power have an obligation to protect.

When visiting with these young advocates, I have been struck by the clarity with which they march. Motivated by a love for their fellow human beings and a love to come to Washington, DC, not to condemn, but rather to affirm that all life is sacred and to encourage a broader realization of that in our Nation.

Every opportunity they have they use to educate and to encourage a point of view that protects life. As other times in our struggle for civil rights in our country, they will make progress to pursue and secure the right to life, and none of those things have happened as quickly as we would like.

As we work to expedite the day when the unborn are protected under law, I welcome to our Nation’s capital all Kansans, as well as the hundreds of thousands more who will join them as they search for, as government begins with the first step, and these young Kansans can be certain their march will not be in vain.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.
drug Daraprim. Daraprim is considered to be the gold standard for the treatment of toxoplasmosis, a disease resulting from a parasite infection that can be particularly harmful to infants born to infected mothers.

During 2015, however, Turing failed to produce an electronic device demonstrating the steps it was taking to preserve these records. Once again, it is left unclear whether or not he retains control relating to the price of Daraprim; exclusive of documents responsive to Schedule A, Specifications 15 and 18. Any documents relating to Daraprim that have been produced pursuant to 2,000 percent.

On December 9, 2015, we issued a subpoena for documents to Mr. Shkreli in his capacity as CEO, compelling Turing to produce the information that had been sought by our November 4 letter. On December 15, 2015, we learned that Mr. Shkreli had been indicted on seven counts unrelated to Turing and predating the company’s corporate existence. The next day Turing announced Mr. Shkreli’s resignation as CEO but left unclear whether or not he remained on its board of directors.

The fact that the company has not made it clear that it would act to preserve Turing business records in its former CEO’s possession left the committee deeply concerned that we might not receive all documents relevant to our investigation. Therefore, on December 22, 2015, the committee requested that Turing provide detailed information on the steps it was taking to preserve these records. Once again, however, Turing failed to produce an adequate response to our request.

Consequently, the Special Committee on Aging issued another document subpoena—this one directly to Mr. Shkreli himself—on December 24. It directed him to produce substantially the same documents sought by the committee’s December 9 subpoena. By a letter dated January 12, 2016, counsel informed our committee that Mr. Shkreli was categorically invoking the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution and was therefore refusing to produce any documents in response to the December 24 subpoena. So this is the important new development. He has chosen, in response to a document subpoena for Turing documents that may be in his personal possession, to invoke the Fifth Amendment

To be clear, Mr. Shkreli is essentially arguing that the very act of producing and authenticating documents that are related to the charges filed against him may incriminate him. The committee has asked him through counsel for an explanation of the rationale for this argument, and we are awaiting a response. The committee is troubled by his unsupported invocation, given that the Turing documents we have requested appear to be unrelated to the charges brought against him. Absent a valid justification of the grounds for invoking the Fifth Amendment, Mr. Shkreli’s assertion could hinder our important investigation.

Our committee is seeking to understand how companies can acquire prescription drugs—drugs for which they had nothing to do with the research and development of drugs that in some cases are more than half a century old—and then suddenly impose dramatic price increases on those drugs at the expense of infants, vulnerable seniors, and others with devastating diseases. Turing has all but eliminated pricing for which in some cases these drugs are the gold standard for treatment.

So far the Special Committee on Aging has received nearly 20,000 documents over the course of this investigation. The documents the Senator from Missouri and I are seeking on behalf of the committee likely include information that is essential in order for us to fully understand why this phenomenon is happening and to develop the legislative and regulatory solutions to end this disturbing practice.

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

UNITED STATES SENATE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 4, 2015

MR. MARTIN SHKRELI,
Chief Executive Officer, Turing Pharmaceuticals LLC, Avenue of the Americas, 29th Floor, New York, NY.

DEAR MR. SHKRELI: The United States Senate Special Committee on Aging is conducting an inquiry into the pricing at off-patent drugs in certain circumstances. We seek your cooperation with this investigation so that the Committee may better understand competing commercial and related regulatory and public policy concerns.

In particular, the Committee wishes to learn more about Turing Pharmaceuticals’ recent acquisition of the rights to sell Daraprim, a drug used to treat and prevent infections, from Impax Laboratories and Turing’s subsequent increase in the price of Daraprim from $13.50 per tablet to $750.00.

In order to assist us in our investigation, we ask that you provide us with the documents set forth in Schedule A and the information set forth in Schedule B by December 2, 2015. Please submit the material responsive to this request as it becomes available, rather than waiting to provide it all at once. In order to facilitate this production, we request that you schedule a time to meet and confer on the Request with Committee Staff as soon as it is practicable for you to do so. The jurisdiction of the Special Committee on Aging is set forth in Section 194 of S. Res. 4, agreed to on February 4, 1977.

We appreciate your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Samuel Dewey of the Majority Staff at (202) 224-7998, or Cathy Yu of the Minority Staff at (202) 224-7532. Please direct all official correspondence to the Committee’s Chief Clerk, Matt Lawrence.

Sincerely,

SUZAN M. COLLINS,
Chairman, U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging.

CLAIRE McCASKILL,
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging.

SCHEDULE A

1. Any analysis conducted by Turing relating to the price of Daraprim; exclusive of documents responsive to Schedule A, Specifications 15 and 18. Any documents relating to Daraprim that have been produced pursuant to 2,000 percent.

2. Any analysis in Turing’s possession, custody, or control relating to the price of Daraprim; exclusive of documents responsive to Schedule A, Specifications 15 and 18.

3. Any communications with Turing’s Board of Directors relating to Daraprim.

4. Any documents generated by the Turing Board of Directors relating to Daraprim.

5. Any projected or historical financial data relating to Daraprim, including, but not limited to, costs, revenues, profits, losses, and cash flow.

6. Any projected or historical financial data relating to Turing’s research and development, including, but not limited to, research and development relating to Daraprim.

7. Any documents evaluating any product market that includes, directly or indirectly, Daraprim, regardless of the definition of the geographic market, including, but not limited to, analysis of barriers to entry thereto.

8. Any documents evaluating any market share that includes Daraprim or the market power of that market share, for any product market or geographic market; exclusive of documents responsive to Schedule A, Specifications 15 and 18.

9. Any communications with Impax relating to Daraprim.

10. Any documents relating to Impax’s sale of Daraprim to Turing.

11. Any contracts entered into by Turing that are related to the production, marketing, and sale of Daraprim.

12. Any marketing or pricing plans prepared for, or being used in, the sale or advertisement of Daraprim, including all documents related thereto.

13. Any documents relating to Patient Assistance Programs relating to Daraprim.

14. Any documents relating to Daraprim and Impirmez.

15. Any documents relating to the price of Daraprim that have been produced pursuant to an investigative inquiry by any federal, state, or local government entity.

16. Any analysis relating to Daraprim and any statute or regulation administered by the FDA.

17. Any communications with the FDA relating to Daraprim; exclusive of documents responsive to Schedule A, Specifications 15 and 18.

18. Any documents relating to the Health Resources and Services Administration’s 340B Drug Discount Program;
exclusive of documents responsive to Schedule A, Specifications 13, 16, or 17, herein.
19. Any projected or historical financial data related to Daraprim and Medicare or Medicaid costs of documents responsive to Schedule A, Specifications 5, 6, or 15-18, herein.
20. Any documents noting, memorialisng, or recording a communication, or a portion thereof, responsive to Schedule A, Specifications 3, 9, or 17, herein.

SCHEDULE B

1. State:
   a. A list of all countries where Daraprim is sold (or is expected to be sold in the next two years from the date of this letter) and the corresponding price or planned price for each country.
   b. In detail, how Turing reached the price for each country.
   c. How the revenue, costs, and any discounts associated with international sales are accounted for within Turing.
2. State in detail any changes Turing has made, or plans to make, to Daraprim or the administration of the drug.
3. Identify the Turing employee responsible for setting the price of Daraprim.
4. Identify the names and addresses of all companies owned in whole or in part by Turing that are involved in the production, marketing, and sale of Daraprim and any of its components.
5. State the total expense to Turing related to the acquisition of Daraprim.
6. State in detail all known uses of Daraprim by medical professionals, including both on-label and off-label uses.
7. State in detail all known protocols, of which Daraprim is a component, used by medical professionals, including both on-label and off-label uses.
8. For each discrete communication that did not occur via document, but which would have been responsive to Specifications 1-19 of Schedule A if made via document, state:
   a. The method of communication.
   b. The date and time of the communication.
   c. The relationship of the author and addressee of the communication to each other.
   d. A general description of the communication.
9. Information responsive to this question should be produced in a native Excel file.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I yield now to the ranking member of the Special Committee on Aging, my colleague Senator MCCASKILL.

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

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

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I think, a very thorough investigation of this issue, and I am proud to be a part of this bipartisan investigation led by Chairman COLLINS so that we can find policy solutions that will help Americans. As she indicated, we have already requested and received over 20,000 documents from multiple sources and have conducted more than 60 interviews with relevant stakeholders, and we plan to continue our investigative efforts until we have assembled a sufficiently complete picture so that we can be confident that any proposed policy solutions are well informed and targeted to the specific problems we have identified. In order to do that, it is important that we get all of the documents that have been requested.

The privilege against self-incrimination is an extraordinarily important and sacred constitutional right. It is a right that this body believes in protecting, and we in no way want to erode it. But as a former prosecutor, I am also very aware of its limitations. In order to invoke the Fifth Amendment, there needs to be a nexus between the documents and the information that one is refusing to provide under the privilege and an actual fear of self-incrimination in a criminal proceeding.

I appreciate the chairman’s conscientious and dogged pursuit of this investigation, and I will continue to cooperate and assist in any way possible. I look forward to continuing the important work of the Special Aging Committee’s investigation into drug prices, and I can assure the public that with the work that Chairman COLLINS is doing along with our staffs and the other members of the committee, we will get some answers.

Thank you, Madam President.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, all across the Middle East and Europe, hundreds of thousands of refugees are fleeing the medieval barbarism of ISIS and the violent cruelty of the Assad regime. Out of a population of 22 million, more than 1 million Syrians have fled to Europe. These refugees—almost all of them women and children—have been living away from their homes for years in Jordan, Turkey, or other host countries, struggling to survive, struggling to be free. Hundreds of thousands have decided to make the dangerous journey to Europe. Many perish along the way. According to the United Nations, over 3,200 refugees attempting to reach Europe died or went missing in 2015 alone.

Throughout our history, when we have been at our best, the United States has accepted the world’s most vulnerable seeking refuge from violence and murder. Our principles don’t mean very much if we jettison them when we find them politically inconvenient or difficult to live by.

The legislation we voted on today represents a significant departure from our proud history. It would require the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, the Director of the FBI, and the Director of National Intelligence to personally certify that each refugee from Syria and Iraq poses no security threat before admission into the United States and would effectively halt the refugee process. This is not the reason I opposed the legislation. It is worth noting it is likely those three officials would be able to do nothing else during the course of the day to keep us secure because they would be busy signing certifications.

I also want to call to mind the testimony we have heard at our committees and people who are experts in this area, that a blanket prohibition like this
doesn’t actually make us safe. Refugees are the most thoroughly vetted group of anyone entering the United States. Let’s start with that. The United States first screens them and collects biometric data. Only those who present and the United States—and refugees don’t even know which country they are going to be referred to when they approach the United Nations. Then multiple agencies—including DHS, the FBI, the State Department, and our intelligence agencies—conduct a rigorous screening process. This includes health checks, repeated biometric checks, several layers of biographical and background screenings and interviews. Out of the 23,000 individuals referred to the United States, only about 2,000 have been accepted. It should be understood by people in this body—and I hope it is understood by the American people—that no refugee enjoys a presumption of acceptance into the United States. The reverse is true. They are required to pass the most stringent standards of any group seeking to enter the United States—a process applicants must endure with uncertainty for over 2 years. Some are turned away, politics, in our view, ought to be having a serious discussion about how actually to keep our country safe and what will make it safer. One of the things I learned when we were working on the immigration bill was which will still be passed the House. I would remind everybody, the only bill to secure our border, the only bill to provide internal security when it comes to immigration was the bill that passed through the Senate that has never been taken up by the House in any form. One of the things I learned was that of the 11 million undocumented people in the United States, 40 percent of them—almost half—are people who came lawfully to the United States but overstayed their visas; and we have no way of tracking that. We have no way of understanding who those people are. This legislation would have fixed that.

I would have loved to have seen the House pass a companion piece of legislation, but that concerns me because there are a bunch of people in here who haven’t been vetted at all. So instead of playing politics, we ought to figure out what we can do.

Another example. A group of us have introduced a bill that strengthens the Visa Waiver Program, which terrorists can exploit to enter the United States. Currently, over 25 million people come to the United States every year through this program. Our legislation addresses important security vulnerabilities and closes the program to foreign fighters. The omnibus we just passed in December included some important parts of our bill. It prevents people who have traveled to terrorist hot spots in the last 5 years—including Iraq and Syria—from even using the Visa Waiver Program. It also requires all travelers using the program to have electronic passports, which are harder to fake. These are big changes to make the American people safer. Together, these changes will help stop terrorists coming to the United States, but there are still important parts of the bill we must pass, including requiring individuals using the Visa Waiver Program to submit biometric data such as fingerprints and photos before boarding a plane to the United States, working with our European partners to close their borders to the flow of foreign fighters heading to ISIS and back, requiring better sharing on foreign fighters and dangerous individuals.

This is not to say that a refugee—or even a U.S. citizen—is not vulnerable to radicalization. We need to be vigilant about that. Americans are justifiably concerned about the reality of the threat and the dangerous world in which we live today. We must counter terrorist groups’ ability to radicalize using social media, both here at home and abroad. Our country needs a much better strategy for countering and degrading ISIS propaganda and its recruitment machine. We have to develop creative and agile technologies to effectively degrade the ability of terrorist organizations such as ISIS and others to persuade, inspire, and recruit by using social media. Congress should also pass the Senate immigration bill I mentioned earlier, which included a historic investment to secure our borders and enhance our interior enforcement.

As a reminder to everybody here, this bill would double the number of border agents, expand fencing, implement new technology and resources, address visa overstays, and provide for full monitoring of every inch of our southern border. By addressing real vulnerabilities and investing in smart security solutions, we can protect our borders and also—and also—live by our values.

We continue to work to return to dark periods in our history when Americans debated turning away those fleeing cruelty around the world.

My mom who was born in Poland in 1938 while Nazi tanks amassed at the borders—she and her parents miraculously survived—Polish Jews—miraculously survived one of the worst human events in human history, and they survived it in and around Warsaw. They lived there for 2 years after the war and then went to Stockholm for a year. They then flew to Mexico City for a year, and then they came to New York City. They came to the one country in the world where they felt they could rebuild those shattered lives.

On my 1st birthday—when I was 1 year old. 1965. 15 years after my mom and her grandparents came to the country—my grandparents sent me a birthday card. This is what they said in that card. They wrote in English, by the way, 15 years after they came to the United States: The ancient Greeks gave the world the high ideals of democracy in search of which your dear mother and we came to the hospitable shores of beautiful America in 1950. We have been happy ever since beyond our greatest dreams and expectations with democracy, freedom, and love and humanity’s greatest treasure. We hope that when you grow up you will help to develop the parts of the world a greater understanding of these American values.

We have very few opportunities to live by our values. This is one of those times. In this case, we are developing them, as my grandparents worried during the Cold War, in other parts of the world. This is making sure that we hold on to the values that have defined us as a nation, that have separated us from so many other nations in the world and made this a place where my grandparents and my mom were able to come and achieve the American dream—a dream that would have seemed unimaginable to them during the Holocaust.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is a basic American value: Families. America has gotten particular about our families. We love our families and we love our kids. It is one of the struggles we have had recently as a nation because we have seen this collapse of the American family, this basic value. We see that unit struggling. Families begin, a husband and a wife, in that incredible moment when a lady looks at a pregnancy test, sees that little line, and realizes there is a baby on the way.

Forty-three years ago as a country there was a decision made by the Supreme Court. That decision forever changed the structure of our families, forever changed the values within the country, because the values shifted 43 years ago, and it changed from there is a baby on the way to that family gets to choose if that is a baby or not. To literally be able to say, based on the values of the marketplace, if it is a baby, we should handle those two things very differently.

I can remember distinctly in my family 19 years-plus ago now, when we saw that little line on the pregnancy test and we started getting a house ready and getting things organized and we started trying to figure out how to get our finances in order and everything ready to go because there was a baby on the way. In those first moments, before we knew whether she was pregnant, we found out that she was pregnant. That was a child coming to our family. She has a name now. Her name is Hannah. With the first of our two daughters, Hannah and Jordan—we understand full well how things started and what things were like in those earliest days. It is remarkable to me that so much of the conversation now circles around preference. At that moment we knew that if we didn’t do something right away to actually reach into the womb and take that child out of the womb—Planned Parenthood and other folks would say
“just to remove the tissue”—that if something wasn’t done from that moment on, there was a baby coming, a baby who would look up into our face and would smile and would have a name.

Americans have lost track of this basic principle. That is not tissue in the womb. When that pregnancy test comes up positive, that is a baby. Regardless of the preference of any individual, that is a baby on the way. Cells are dividing. For many they don’t find out for maybe a couple of months even and begin to figure out something is really changing and they do a quick test. Sometimes by the time they even do a test there is a beating heart there. They look in with a sonogram and count 10 fingers, 10 toes. If you were to reach in and do a DNA test, you would find out that lump of tissue that is in there is not tissue. It has DNA different than the mom, different than the dad. That is a child. It is a unique life. Its health determines on a preference. That life is determined based on that dividing cell as a child with 10 fingers and toes.

I can’t think of anything else we have in America where anyone can say, based on preference, I choose to have that to be alive or I choose for that not to be alive. I can’t just look at this desk and say I choose to call that a life because we know life has basic criteria. It has dividing cells. It can function on its own independent. It is life. We know what life is. We can’t casually say one thing is life and one thing is not, just like we casually don’t just try to fight off the destruction of tissue in other ways.

I always smile when I hear some folks on the other side of this argument say they want abortion to be safe, legal, and rare. I hear it all the time—safe, legal, and rare. When someone says that to me, I always ask the question: How do you understand safe and legal? Why would you care if it is rare? If it is just tissue, why does it matter if you remove it?

No one has a big national movement to fight individuals from taking warts off their hands because everyone knows, if you have a wart on your hand, it is just tissue and no one cares if you take that off. They understand that really is your body. It is a wart on your hand and it doesn’t look good, so take it off. You understand it is safe and legal. I think even if you are opposed to the government in the way it comes to abortion because I believe inherently even the individuals who say safe, legal, and rare understand it is not just tissue or you wouldn’t say it has to be rare. You understand it is an incredibly painful, difficult decision that a mom is making because she knows in her gut that is not tissue. That is a child, a child who would one day have a name and a smile. That is a child.

In Congress we get to decide whether it is just tissue or a child because the government will step in and say: If you have a second child, you can’t have that one. You have to destroy the second child. Now, in their benevolence, China has shifted to say you can have up to two children in certain areas and in certain regions, but if you have a third one, you have to destroy that child. In America, for whatever reason, we have individuals with the freedom to be able to say: I prefer for this not to be a child. Suddenly, somehow our culture says: OK. You can pick.

The Supreme Court in 1973 looked at this issue, and they argued a lot about viability, what they call quickening. This conversation about viability really circled around whether States could actually make laws protecting the lives of children once they reach viability. In 1973, viability was very different than what it is today. In the NICU—neonatal intensive care units—you will find a large area in most hospitals. You ought to go by and visit and walk into an NICU area because you will find many, many rooms and many beds there. Decades ago that wasn’t true because children at 22 weeks and 24 weeks didn’t survive before. Now a higher and higher percentage are.

There are children who are in Oklahoma. They go for a test. The NICU who was weighing just a tiny bit more than two iPhones. That is their weight when they are born—just a tiny bit more than two iPhones in weight. Yet they are growing up to be healthy, productive kids. They are alive.

We are getting better at NICU as well, learning how to provide oxygen so their lungs develop. I visited some of the physicians in the NICU at OU Children’s Hospital over the Christmas break and said: What have we learned? What have we gained? Is this getting better?

They talked about how we feed differently now than we did decades ago. At NICU, we understand how they are developing. We understand how they are developing food, and we want their digestive systems to develop. Things are very different now in science. It is forcing the country to rethink an issue again: When is a child a child?

I also want to affirm thousands of volunteers around the country—many of them coming this week to the March for Life—who serve every single week at the crisis pregnancy centers around the country, who lovingly walk with moms through some of the most difficult days of their lives as they make hard decisions. With great compassion, they walk them through a tough pregnancy. Then they are with them in the days afterward delivering, bringing them to them, bringing formula to them, helping them in those early moments. Thousands of volunteers around the country do that every single week. Good for them. Good for our country.

I think in the decades ahead, our Nation will catch up to the science and will look back on a season in our country when we ignored the obvious: When a pregnancy test says positive, that is not for tissue; that is positive for a baby.

I also want to affirm thousands of volunteers around the country—many of them coming this week to the March for Life—who serve every single week at the crisis pregnancy centers around the country, who lovingly walk with moms through some of the most difficult days of their lives as they make hard decisions.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.
During that debate, I was reminded of the words of Pope Francis’s historic and moving address to a joint session of Congress in the House Chamber last fall which I did not hear, not live, because we were ordered to follow the Standing Order Rule—to treat other people the way we want to be treated, to love our neighbors as ourselves. He also invoked Matthew 25, which deals with “the least of these”: When I was hungry, did you feed me? When I was naked, did you clothe me? When I was thirsty, did you give me drink? When I was a stranger in your land, did you take me in? I think we have a moral imperative to provide for “the least of these,” but at the same time, we have a moral imperative to protect Americans from extremists who seek to come to the United States to cause us harm. As we learn to address this tension, our Nation has rigorous screening procedures in place for all refugees, as well as enhanced vetting for refugees who might be coming here from Syria. It is a process that takes an average of 2 years to complete.

For those who aren’t familiar with the process, people—in this case, 4 million Syrian refugees—first begin their long journey to the U.S. from the U.N. but also by us overseas, and they are vetted by people, interviewed by people who are trained to detect deception.

We have the ability to check these people against any number of the databases that relate to potential terrorist activity. If I were a terrorist, I want to embed myself with a terrorist group, I am not going to wait 2 years to do that and face the most rigorous of vetting processes for anyone trying to come to this country. For example, the process could be even longer than that. It is a long time to wait for terrorists if they were going to try to use the refugee program to access the United States. If I were a terrorist trying to come here, the last thing I would do is go through those 2 years of vetting.

While I understand my colleagues’ concerns, the refugee bill that we dealt with today would do little to address our Nation’s security needs. That is why many of my colleagues in my party and I opposed the bill. The bill that was before us would require the head of top national security agencies to personally certify that each refugee from Syria and Iraq poses no security threat before admission to the United States—not even.

If this bill had passed, it would have served as a backdoor way to shut off the refugee program by requiring our national security leaders—the head of the FBI, Director of National Intelligence, Director of National Security—to promise something they would never promise. As currently drafted, this bill would require these three national security leaders to guarantee that the refugee will never, never become a security threat. That is not how these leaders or their organizations evaluate security threats. They don’t have a crystal ball, and they cannot predict the future. Simply put, the SAFE Act would effectively stop the resettlement of fully vetted refugee women, children, families, and older folks from Syria and Iraq and would weaken our national security. Again, that is one of the reasons I believe we must focus our attention on threats that pose a greater risk to our homeland.

Democrats put forward a series of commonsense solutions—alternatives, if you will—that will strengthen our security and help protect us against the threats posed by ISIS. If I were one of the 2,000 folks who came here after fighting left Syria to try to get away to save their lives. They are in refugee camps in that part of the world, and the United Nations has a special mission which includes to vet them, to get to know them, to speak with them, and to see if they would like to stay in a refugee camp or try to get settled into some other country.

In vetting the 4 million refugees, a small fraction of those are folks who indicated that they would be interested in maybe resettling in this country. At the end of the day, after winnowing down from 4 million refugees, I believe the U.N. sent us 7,000 names. Out of the 7,000, we selected 2,000—mostly kids, mostly families, mostly old people, and not very many men of fighting age, if you will. But the President has called for increasing that 2,000 to something like 10,000 over the next year—of course, this year.

Think about that. Out of 4 million, what percentage of 4 million is 10,000 people? Even if we took all 10,000, it is one-quarter of 1 percent. That is what it is; one-quarter of 1 percent. There are obviously concerns about whether any of these are dangerous or pose an imminent danger to our people. Keep in mind that 2,000 have come in the course of the last year, and not one has been arrested, not one has been convicted of plotting or trying terrorist activity. One of the reasons that happens is if we have an Eid celebration left Syria and were in Iraq and wanted to get over, I sure wouldn’t spend 2 years trying to come through with the refugees. That is the most stringent vetting of any group of people who want to come to this country. They have to undergo biometric checks. They are interviewed by people who are trained not just by the U.N. but also by us overseas, and
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

January 20, 2016

S122

develop ways to message and communicate with young people in this country who were either smoking or thinking about becoming smokers. Some of us remember from our youth—and when I was a kid growing up, this was thought to be a desirable thing. Early on, we were not aware of the health consequences to it. We would see all kinds of people in commercials on television advertising smoking, and you would think that would be a cool thing to do. The American Legacy Foundation came along in 2001 and developed a counter-message to all of that, and we called it the Truth Campaign. The Truth Campaign was a multimedia campaign that was included in radio and TV commercials, as well as on the Internet and in magazines and that sort of thing, that young people read or listened to. The narratives and the messaging communications were not developed in boardrooms or by someone like me or the paidAmerican Legacy Foundation; they were developed by young people who could have been 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, or 18 years old who developed an area and said: This is a message you need to send out through all of these mediums to try to convince them not to smoke or if they are already smoking, to quit. And that is what we did.

If you look at the incidence of smoking for people who were preteens and teenagers in this country in 2001 and what it was by the end of the last decade, it is amazing how well it worked. It was called the Truth Campaign. The messaging and the messages developed by our target audience were hard-hitting. There was a saying when I went to business school: Talk to your customer and ask them what they want. That is what we did. The Texas State climatologist, Dr. Go Aggies.

The Department of Homeland Security is attempting to start up an office called the Office of Community Partnership. It is an office that would work with Muslim communities across the country, including families, religious leaders, and other young people, in order to try to make sure young people do not become radicalized and undertake activities that are going to harm other folks in this country. I think it is a very important initiative. The Department leading this community partnership office at the Department of Homeland Security are going to work with the American Legacy Foundation to see what worked and really changed the game with respect to young people smoking in this country in 2001 and what it was by the end of the last decade. We may be able to apply some of those lessons to deter the likelihood of people of Muslim faith who are somehow convinced that their faith directs them to undertake these violent activities. I am encouraged by this prospect.

The last thing I will say is that we have 1½ billion people around the world who are Muslims. I am Protestant, and there are people of different faiths in this body. There are Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and others. Among the things we have in common, as well as with the Muslim faith, is something I mentioned earlier—the Golden Rule. Major religion on Earth has several things in common, but one of the things they have in common is the Golden Rule, which is to love your neighbor as yourself and treat other people the way you want to be treated. If you are a Muslim, if you are Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, or Muslim, somewhere in your Sacred Scripture is that idea, that notion, that directive.

There are some people who take my Christian faith and turn it on its head to say and do things that we would never do and should never do. We take the Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament, and instead of embracing Matthew 25—the least of these, what we have in common, what you and I have in common as human beings, did you take me in—we are basically saying: We are not going to let any people in this country who are, say, of the Muslim faith. That is not a Christian thing to say or do.

People talk about my religion, my faith and turn it into something that it is not even close to being, and, not surprisingly, there are some people who do that with the Muslim faith. We need to counter that and help the vast majority of folks in this country who are Muslim to better counter them in ways which, frankly, I could never do but which people in Muslim communities and of that faith across the country would like to do and want to do. We need to be a good partner and help them to be successful in that effort. Frankly, that is a whole lot better alternative than the legislation that was before us today, and that is one thing we ought to be able to agree on. I hope my colleagues—Democratic, Republican, and Independent—will find a path to join me and others who think this is a good idea and make it happen. With that, I will pass the baton to my friend from another big State, Rhode Island.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the opportunity to speak today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENTIAL OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise for “Time to Wake Up” speech No. 124.

Today, let’s talk Texas. Polling from the University of Texas at Austin shows that more than three out of four Americans—76 percent—now believe that climate change is occurring. Fifty-nine percent of Republicans say it is happening. While most poll respondents say they would support a Presidential candidate who supports reducing coal as an energy source, the number goes up to 65 percent for voters under the age of 35. So we might expect Republican Presidential hopefuls to acknowledge the problem and incorporate climate action into their campaign platforms. We might, but we would be wrong.

Republican candidates for President have a key constituency: fossil fuel billionaire donors. So the candidates ignore the clear tide of public opinion, mock the warming of scientific consensus, and national security experts, dismiss climate disruptions in their own home States, and dismiss the world-class climate research of their own home State universities and scientists—even in Texas.

When asked if global warming is real, the junior Senator from Texas responds that the “data and facts don’t support it. . . . Science should follow the facts.” OK. Let’s follow the data and facts.

NOAA and NASA just announced that 2015 was the warmest year ever recorded on Earth. That is a fact, and it is not an anomaly. It is the continuation of a clear trend. Fifteen of the warmest years ever recorded by humankind on this planet are the 15 years of this century.

Texas A&M has a department of atmospheric sciences. The faculty there have unanimously adopted this statement:

1. The Earth’s climate is warming, meaning that the temperatures of the lower atmosphere and ocean have been increasing over many decades. Average global surface air temperatures warmed by about 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit between 1880 and 2012.

2. It is extremely likely that humans are responsible for more than half of the global warming between 1961 and 2012.

3. Under so-called “business-as-usual” emissions scenarios, additional global-average warming (relative to a 1986 to 2005 baseline) would likely be 3°C to 4°C degrees Fahrenheit by the end of this century.

That is Texas A&M’s scientific assessment supported by the data and facts.

Go Aggies.

The Texas State climatologist, Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon, appointed to his position by Governor George W. Bush, has concluded that “fossil fuel burning and other activities are the primary cause of the global-scale increase in temperature over the past decades.”

According to a Yale University poll released last fall, most Texans—61 percent of Texas adults—support setting stricter limits on coal-fired power plants. Well, the President’s Clean Power Plan would do just that. It is projected to both cut carbon emissions and save Americans money on their annual energy bills. Yet the junior Senator from Texas rails against the plan, urging people “to stand up against this assault on our economy”—economic decline—economic decline if you are a big polluter, maybe, used to polluting for free. The Clean Power
Plan will save the average American family nearly $85 on their annual energy bill by 2030, not to mention preventing death and disease through reduced soot, smog, and other harmful pollutants.

A study found that strong limits on carbon pollution similar to those in the Clean Power Plan would prevent 2,300 deaths in Texas between 2020 and 2030. Texas emits the highest amount of carbon pollution in the country. Yet Texas is well positioned to meet its Clean Power Plan targets.

An Environmental Defense Fund study based on data from Texas’s primary electric grid operator shows that existing market trends alone will get Texas to 80 percent of its compliance with the plan as a result of increased wind power capacity, improved energy efficiency results, and switching from coal to natural gas. In fact, Texas’s wind farms have become so good at generating power that some utilities are giving away energy.

Here is an article from the New York Times on this unique situation in Texas with the headline “A Texas Utility Offers a Nighttime Special: Free Electricity.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD at the end of my remarks.

Scott Burns, the senior director of innovation at Reliant Energy, a Texas utility with plans to incentivize night and weekend electricity use, says: “You can be green and make green.”

With Texas so strong in wind energy production and solar energy potential, Texas is actually in a position to use its clean energy resources to help other States comply with the Clean Power Plan, a win-win with even more Texas clean energy jobs.

So, in Texas, there is an overwhelming consensus of scientists at their own State universities, there is a desire for politics among the majority of Texans, and there are vast economic opportunities from Texas renewable energy. But the junior Senator from Texas continues to rail against mainstream climate science. He claims that “according to the satellite data, there has been no significant global warming for the past 18 years.” Eighteen years. What an interesting number to pick—18 years. If we go back 18 years, we start in 1998.

When will the junior Senator from Texas start his assessment of satellite data in 1998? Well, look at this. When PolitiFact investigated the Senator’s claim that global warming has paused, the Senator’s office referred to the work of Dr. Carl Mears, a scientist who worked with satellite data temperature sets. This is a graph of that data. Look at 1998. The Earth was experiencing a large El Nino event in 1998, and the observed temperatures were substantially above normal. So if that is where we start, of course it is going to look like a pause. As the Washington Post put it, “There is a reason why CRUZ uses this particular year, and that reason is what makes this claim misleading.” PolitiFact ruled him “mostly false,” by the way.

The whole data set shows a clear, unequivocal, long-term global warming trend. As Dr. Mears himself stated, “You can’t look at a data set since 1980 and say it’s pretty clear that there’s been an ascending trend there. But if you look at any 15-year period, it’s a lot less clear that the trend line that you drive might actually mean something.” Dr. Mears also warns against drawing conclusions from just one data set. “Look at all the different datasets,” he said. “You don’t want to trust only the satellite temperatures; you want to look at the surface temperatures and that sort of thing.”

Scientists have known for some time that the oceans bear the brunt of global warming. The reason is simple: They can absorb more heat than the atmosphere, and they do. Peter Gleckler, an oceanographer at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, said, “Nine-tenths of the heat that is accumulated in the oceans is in the oceans.”

A study released this month shows the world’s oceans absorbed—I don’t think this number has ever been said before on the Senate floor—approximately 65 percent of the energy equivalent to a Hiroshima-style bomb being exploded every second for a year, the total energy released would be 2 zettajoules. . . . Since 1997, Earth’s oceans have absorbed man-made heat energy equivalent to a Hiroshima-style bomb being exploded every second for 75 straight years.

Yet the Senator from Texas would like us to cherry-pick our calculation on a cherry-picked data set beginning in an outlier year.

The oceans aren’t just warming, unfortunately. The warming in the oceans is accelerating. Paul Durack, coauthor of the study, notes, “After 2000 in particular the rate of change is really starting to ramp up.”

People who insist that the climate has not warmed in recent decades ignore a lot, but one thing they particularly ignore is the oceans, and we measure this stuff. The oceans don’t lie.

Here is another good one from the junior Senator. The Senator from Texas informs us that “history with markedly more C0₂ predated the Industrial Revolution, so it didn’t come from automobiles or the burning of carbon fuels.” What he omits is that this history with markedly more C0₂ occurred more than 800,000 years ago.

This chart shows that here is where we are right now. Here is the record of carbon dioxide going back 800,000 years. In that period was it more than now? Never. Eight hundred thousand years, hundreds of thousands of years before humans even began to walk the Earth.

Greenhouse gases blanket our planet, absorbing the Sun’s energy and preventing heat from escaping back into space. Ice sheets melt, seas warm and rise, and so since the late 1800s, sea level has risen 3 feet along the shores of Galveston, TX. None of that matters to the junior Senator from Texas.

In December he even convened a hearing protesting scientific consensus on climate change as “partisan dogma and ideology.” Tell that to NASA and the U.S. Navy. At the time, more than 190 countries were negotiating the groundbreaking international climate agreement in Paris, and it was on hand in Paris too. Austin mayor Steve Adler signed the Compact of Mayors, a “global coalition of mayors pledging to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions, enhance resilience to climate change, and report transparently.” Katherine Romanak and Hilary Olson represented the University of Texas’s Gulf Coast Carbon Center to share their expertise on carbon capture and storage. Robert Buillard, dean of the School of Public Affairs at Houston’s Texas Southern University, organized a delegation from the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Climate Change Consortium, and Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, director of the Climate Science Center at Texas Tech University, encouraged fellow evangelicals to join her in faith-inspired support for climate action.

On that subject, let me read into the RECORD the 2015 statement of the National Association of Evangelicals:

[The Earth belongs to God, not us . . . . Probably the most serious and urgent challenge of the physical world now is the threat of climate change. . . . We encourage Christians worldwide to . . . . exert legitimate means to persuade governments to put moral imperatives above political expediency on issues of environment, destruction and potential climate change.

Well, as the President said last week, America “led nearly 200 nations to the most ambitious agreement in history to fight climate change.”

The junior Senator from Texas would be President, yet he completely refuses to engage on climate change. He ignores Texas State universities, Texas scientists, Texas local officials, and the whole clean energy economy in Texas. He courts evangelicals. He associates himself with the evangelical movement, but he ignores the statement of their own national association.

Now, some say his candidacy is a danger to our distinct American heritage, the separation of church and state. But, really, it seems to me his problem is with the separation of oil and state.

The fossil fuel industry is the last bastion of climate denial. It funds a vast apparatus of climate denial. It also funds a lot of politics. You do the math.

It is time to wake up. I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from Maryland, American Safe Act

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time as a Senator from Maryland, as well as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to talk about the bill, because as I said earlier today—on the motion to proceed to the so-called SAFE Act dealing with Syrian refugees. I like to call it the fear act because I think it really is an act that is misguided, makes a lot of mistakes, and I think it would compromise U.S. security. Let me tell my colleagues why.

We face the greatest crisis on refugees and displaced individuals since World War II. The number is about 60 million people who are currently refugees or displaced. The largest numbers right now are coming out of Syria. Make no mistake about it—millions are coming out of Syria. They are escaping the Assad regime’s barrel bombs and gases and starvation policies. These are victims. These are people who are losing their lives because of the barbaric regime of President Assad. Our values are that we respond to those issues, that we act in a responsible way, that we help the international community to help those people who are trying to escape the persecutions of oppressive regimes.

The fear act would shut down the U.S. process of accepting Syrian refugees. Why do I say that? Because it would require the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Director of National Intelligence—all three—to certify, on an individual basis, the ability of these individuals to meet our standards to come into the United States. That would require 100 certifications per day, 300 certifications total.

What else would they be doing? I hope the Director of the FBI is working to keep our country safe and more than just dealing with the Syrian refugees. This would cut down and eliminate our ability to accept Syrian refugees.

Let me cite some of the numbers. The United States has received 2,000 Syrian refugees. There are millions of Syrian refugees. The total number the President has talked about is 10,000—a small fraction of the total numbers who are being relocated under the Syrian refugee program. We look at the numbers coming out of Syria. We look at the number coming out of the Middle East. We look at the number coming out of Afghanistan. This is not limited to Syria.

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small burden here, and it is individuals who do not pose a threat. I will explain that. Every one of us will do everything we can to make sure that our homeland is safe. I am prepared to do everything reasonable to make sure we keep Americans as safe as we possibly can from the threat of terrorism.

So what do these Syrian refugees go through? By the way, there has not been a reported case of a Syrian refugee in regards to terrorism. What do they go through?

First, they are screened by the High Commissioner for Refugees of the United Nations. They screen the individuals who are considered eligible to come to the United States. They go through that screening process. Then they are fingerprinted and go through a biometric check. They go through several layers of biographical and background screenings. They are individually interviewed by U.S. officials. It takes about 18 to 24 months. If you are asked 50 questions you are not going to go through this.

It is up to the potential individual who will come to the United States as a refugee to establish that they are a refugee. That means they must establish they were a victim of a terrorist activities in order to be able to get to the United States. It is up to them to establish that burden. We don’t accept individuals who cannot establish that burden. This is not the target group that we should be concerned about.

The real threat to our homeland security—let’s take a look at others who come to this country. We already did this in the omnibus bill, but we know under the Visa Waiver Program there are individuals who hold passports of countries with which we have the Visa Waiver Program. That means they are countries that have relations with the United States, and we generally accept their visa. But what we found out these countries have foreign fighters who have gone to the affected areas that could very well be involved in terrorist activities and then come back to the European country and come to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program. Well, we took some action against that in last year’s bill. That was good. We need to continue to scrutinize that.

What we saw happen in California was that a husband and wife who didn’t come under a Syrian waiver program or a Syrian refugee program, but who came under other visa programs. That needs to be scrutinized. For people who come to America, we need to know that they are not connected to a terrorist organization.

But the greatest concern is the radicalization of Americans. We need to know why people do what they do. We need to have a better system to protect the homeland. Let’s focus on the real problem here in our country. If this bill were to be passed, it would actually make us less safe. It would affect our national security. Let me tell you the reason why. First, it would clearly diminish U.S. leadership. When we go and seek international support, particularly for our coalition against ISIL, our failure to be willing to take any of the Syrian refugees will certainly compromise America’s credibility and ability to lead internationally.

It will be used by ISIL as propaganda. Make no mistake about that. They understand that. This is what they are saying about America.

It is against our values. It makes us weaker as a nation.

It is for those reasons that we found that national security professionals from both parties, including Henry Kissinger, David Petraeus, Brent Scowcroft, and Michael Chertoff, all have come out in opposition on the grounds that it would undermine our security and benefit ISIL. These are professionals. They understand the risk factors.

What we should be doing is everything we can to protect us from the threat of ISIL. That means let’s figure out ways we can share intelligence information among all of our willing partners. Let’s provide the leadership, particularly to those countries which ISIL can operate, so that the governments represent all the communities, so that there is not a void where the Sunni minority population feels that their only safety is with ISIL.

Let’s make sure we cut off all the financial support for ISIL, including their oil abilities and the transport of oil. This is what the Obama administration is doing. Let’s make sure we do cut off any opportunities to expand their capacity.

Let’s deal with foreign fighters—people who come from Western countries who go to these areas and train. Let’s make sure that we know where they are, and when they try to come back, we apprehend them. Make sure that they are apprehended and tried because of their affiliation with terrorists.

Let’s help countries such as Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon that are taking on the extreme burdens of the refugees so they can deal with their own crises that have been exaggerated because of the Syrian conflict and ISIL formation.

In other words, let us work in a coordinated way to root out the main cause of the terrorist activities; that is, let’s cut off all the support to ISIL and to gain territory. Let’s take away that territory, coordinate our air-strikes, and work with the local forces on the ground. All of that should be done, and we need to work together on that.

Let’s concentrate on the few thousand Syrian refugees who have gone through this country’s strictest vetting process makes little sense and will not keep us safer, but, as I indicated before, will actually compromise our national security.

In closing, let me state what makes this Nation the great Nation that it is. I think each of us knows that we are living in a special country—a country that has stood up for freedom, a country that has been looked upon as a beacon of hope around the world. Many of our parents and grandparents came from other countries in order to settle in this country because of its opportunity.

I am a student of history, not just because it is an effective, factual counterpart to the cluster of politicians and social media accounts. History can be a touchstone to remind us of who we are and who we are. Throughout our history, we have recognized that even in times of war we were fighting leaders of authoritarian regimes and not their victims. From 1945 to 1952, we resettled 400,000 displaced persons from Nazi-controlled areas in Europe. In the fall of Saigon in 1997, the United States rescued 883,000-plus refugees who fled Vietnam, a country with which we had been in a state of undeclared war that lasted 58,000 American lives.

Between 1970 and 1991, we resettled 200,000 Jews from the Soviet Union, the very government which posed the greatest security threat the United States has ever known. In addition, we have resettled hundreds of thousands of refugees from Cuba and other countries behind the Iron Curtain.

This Republican bill we considered today dishonors our proud history of providing a safe haven. History can be harsh and unsentimental. This bill risks repeating mistakes of the past when the United States tragically turned away Jewish refugees in World War II.

After the photo of Aylan Kurdi, the 3-year-old who was washed up on the beach, we were opened their hearts to the Syrian people. The American people opened their hearts to the Syrian people. The American people recognize the distinction between those who are victims of terror and those who perpetrate it. We should not let knaves or a lens through which we can see who we are. Throughout our history, we have recognized that even in times of war we were fighting leaders of authoritarian regimes and not their victims.

We should never compromise homeland security. We need to do everything we can to keep Americans safe. We need to make sure we have the strictest vetting procedures for anyone who wants to come to this country as a refugee. We will always do a better job, and we have to do more to understand why Americans have been converted to radicalization through the Internet and what has happened on social media.

Yet, we need to do a much more effective job of keeping America safe and the homeland safe, but shutting down the Syrian refugee program would be a major mistake for our values of who we are as a nation and for our national security.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.
Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be allowed to speak as in morning business for up to 7 minutes.

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

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the life and legacy of Paul Kinsman. Paul was born in Watertown, SD, on September 7, 1958, and died in Pierre, SD, on January 10, 2016, at the young age of 57. Paul was a lifelong South Dakotan and a dedicated public servant to the citizens of our State.

After earning his law degree, Paul began 28 years of public service to the people of South Dakota. We are a better State and a better people because of his hard work and his dedication.

As an administrative law judge, the deputy commissioner of administration, the director of property taxes and special taxes, the commissioner of administration, and the secretary of revenue, he inspired his coworkers with his intelligence, his humor, and his tenacity for getting things done.

During my 8 years working as Governor of South Dakota, Paul served as commissioner of the Bureau of Administration and secretary of revenue. He was a burly, teddy bear of a man. No matter how hard the problem or how challenging the issue, whenever we met he had a gleam in his eyes and a smile on his face that told me without words that we were going to solve that problem or meet that challenge. And we did because of him.

As an administrative law judge and tax collector, he earned the respect and admiration of the public, even when his rulings and applications of law were not in their favor. He was straightforward and fair, which South Dakotans appreciate.

As the head of the Bureau of Administration and secretary of revenue, he was a kind, hardworking public servant to the citizens of South Dakota in the people's house, our State Capitol.

But more important than all of his career accomplishments is the kind of person Paul Kinsman was. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend to all who knew him. He had a positive impact on the lives of South Dakotans, and his service and dedication to our State are appreciated.

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Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the life and legacy of Paul Kinsman. Paul was born in Watertown, SD, on September 7, 1958, and died in Pierre, SD, on January 10, 2016, at the young age of 57. Paul was a lifelong South Dakotan and a dedicated public servant to the citizens of our State.

After earning his law degree, Paul began 28 years of public service to the people of South Dakota. We are a better State and a better people because of his hard work and his dedication.

As an administrative law judge, the deputy commissioner of administration, the director of property taxes and special taxes, the commissioner of administration, and the secretary of revenue, he inspired his coworkers with his intelligence, his humor, and his tenacity for getting things done.

During my 8 years working as Governor of South Dakota, Paul served as commissioner of the Bureau of Administration and secretary of revenue. He was a burly, teddy bear of a man. No matter how hard the problem or how challenging the issue, whenever we met he had a gleam in his eyes and a smile on his face that told me without words that we were going to solve that problem or meet that challenge. And we did because of him.

As an administrative law judge and tax collector, he earned the respect and admiration of the public, even when his rulings and applications of law were not in their favor. He was straightforward and fair, which South Dakotans appreciate.

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when people live free of government coercion and control. In America, individuals can practice any faith or no faith. This is true religious freedom—having the freedom to practice a faith or to have no faith at all and to have that choice not only be respected, but protected.

Respecting and protecting this fundamental human right means that we cannot diminish it. The constitutional guarantee of the free exercise of religion means that people have a right to live by their faith in public. Saying someone has the right to worship freely at the place of their choosing is not the same thing. Additionally, while one faith group should not be favored over another, so too should we not err on the side of removing faith from the public sphere and opting for no religion at all.

Thomas Jefferson left explicit instructions that his authorship of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom be included on his gravestone as one of only three things for which he wanted “most to be remembered.”

As we celebrate the 230th anniversary of the passage of this statute, what will we be most remembered for? I hope that when we are remembered, we are not only honoring this legacy of Thomas Jefferson, but for upholding a right that is fundamental to the core of this nation and to human dignity—religious freedom.

MEMORABLE OFFICER RICARDO GALVEZ

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Downey police officer Ricardo Galvez, a devoted son and brother who was tragically killed in the line of duty on November 19, 2015.

Officer Galvez was born on April 2, 1986, and grew up in Whittier, CA. In 2006, Ricardo joined the Downey Police Department as a police aide and 2 years later decided to serve his country by joining the U.S. Marine Corps as a Reservist. After bravely serving in Iraq, Officer Galvez returned to Downey and became a police officer in 2010. He deployed again in December 2012 to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Those who knew Officer Galvez fondly remember him as a caring man with an infectious smile, a person of great humility and kindness, and a trusted colleague and friend who was committed to his family and career.

The U.S. Marine Corps’ motto, Semper Fidelis, is Latin for “always faithful” and truly embodied Officer Ricardo Galvez. He dedicated his entire adult life to public service, unwavering in his commitment to defend Americans abroad and safeguard his community at home. His devoted and courageous service earned the respect and affection of the community he was sworn to protect alongside the community he served, and the family and friends he loved. He will be deeply missed.

On behalf of the people of California, for whom he served so bravely, I extend my gratitude and deepest sympathies to Ricardo’s mother, Margarita; brother, Pedro; sisters, Nancy and Sandra; and his entire extended family.

TRIBUTE TO DIANNE BEECHER

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, today I wish to commend Dianne Beecher who has honorably served the people of Pennsylvania for over 28 years, most recently as senior constituent advocate for my Senate office. Dianne has been a trusted member of my staff and a loyal friend over the 11 years we have worked together.

Before her years in public service, Dianne had already proven herself to be a kind of “Renaissance woman.” She dabbled in entrepreneurship, worked as an entertainment promoter, and spent a period of time as a race car driver. While creating this unique resume, Dianne’s most important and dearest role was that of a devoted mother to five children—Sharryl, Alleen, Jodi, Bradley, and Brandee. Carrying her compassion for people into her professional life, Dianne found her passion for serving her fellow Pennsylvanians.

Dianne originally joined my staff in the auditor general’s office in 2004; when I became State treasurer, she moved with me. In that office, she assisted in creating one of the first constituent services operations within the treasury department. When I was later elected to the U.S. Senate, Dianne continued her dedication to the people of Pennsylvania as the senior constituent advocate on my constituent services team.

Early in my first term as a U.S. Senator, Dianne became a vital component in the establishment of my office’s constituent services operation. Through her role as senior constituent advocate, Dianne has literally saved the lives of countless Pennsylvanians. Over the years, she managed hundreds of cases, specializing in Social Security and Medicare, while maintaining a genuine interest in each constituent she encountered. Dianne has saved the health insurance coverage for individuals suffering from serious illnesses, allowing them to continue care and maintain their medications.

She is responsible for the financial stability of countless people unable to work due to their medical conditions. In one instance, Dianne’s work was recognized by National Public Radio when she saved a family in the midst of the 2008 housing crisis by helping them find much-needed mortgage relief from Social Security. Most constituent services work goes unacknowledged by the press; however, Dianne’s commitment and compassion remains the same for every case in her portfolio. She works meticulously and regularly goes beyond the call of duty to provide the resources and support needed for the people of the Commonwealth.

Throughout her career, Dianne has served the people of Pennsylvania with distinction and diligence. Her compassion and commitment to helping others left a lasting impression not only within my office, but in the lives she touched through her good work. I wish her well in her retirement and hope she will have the opportunity to enjoy more time with her children, 10 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING CARL SHARIF

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the life and legacy of New Jerseyan and proud Newarker Carl Sharif, who passed away on September 30 at the age of 72. Carl was a dear friend and mentor to me at the dawn of my career in public service. He will be greatly missed by the city of Newark and by all who knew him.

A son of Newark, Carl began his career as an aide to Mayor Hugh Addonizio in the 1960s, and he remained a dedicated public servant for the rest of his life. During times of great tumult and change, Carl was a steady presence in Newark, working from within its government to strengthen the city’s spirit and foundation. In 1970, Carl helped to lead the campaign to elect Kenneth Gibson, the first Black mayor of Newark. He served as an aide to Mayor Gibson and as a member of Newark’s school board, quickly becoming its president.

Carl was incredibly generous with his time and with his tremendous political and institutional knowledge. He served as my early mentor as a young professional politician, and he led me through my first campaign for city council and my second campaign for mayor. It was Carl who insisted that the key to significant and lasting change in our city was through walking every street, knocking on every door, and talking with every Newarker. Carl reminded all of us that we were never to forget the people we were elected to serve, and I will be forever grateful for his wisdom, support, and advice through the years. I cherish all that he taught me, and I will do everything I can to honor his legacy through my work and life.

Carl was committed to ensuring the best for Newark and all of its people. Threatened himself wholly to our city and its people, and they loved him in return. For his family, friends, our city, and our State, Carl leaves a legacy of public service and unwavering faith in the goodness of our community. As we reflect on this inheritance, I wish to honor Carl Sharif’s love for and service to his city and its people and in remembering his extraordinary life.
TRIBUTE TO BLAKE WOMBOLD
• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I would like to honor Blake Wombold of Heart Butte, a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserves, for his generous contribution of new shoes for the Heart Butte High School Boys basketball team.

Blake was born in Browning, MT, and is an alumnus of Heart Butte High School, where there were only 19 students in his graduating class. He played basketball throughout his high school career and truly feels basketball is “King” in Indian Country. Blake went on to graduate from Kootenai College with a general science degree. He has been with the Army Reserves for 7 years, is a staff sergeant, E-6, as well as a combat trainer/biomedical equipment technician.

This year marks the second year that Blake has donated new shoes to Heart Butte’s basketball team. Growing up, Blake witnessed the sacrifices his mother, a teacher at Heart Butte School, made to provide for him, and he wanted to be able to give back to the community that supported him.

Staff Sergeant Wombold is currently preparing to deploy overseas. His selfless heart is a true example of what it means to be a Montanan. On behalf of all Montanans, I am proud of his service to our community, State, and Nation.

REMEMBERING ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS T. HURLEY
• Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, this week Alaska’s faith communities are mourning the loss of Archbishop Emeritus Francis T. Hurley who passed on January 10, 2 days shy of his 89th birthday. Archbishop Hurley will be buried at the company of all Montanans, I am proud of his service to our community, State, and Nation.

Archbishop Hurley was ordained a priest of the San Francisco Archdiocese in 1951. He came to Alaska in 1970 as the auxiliary bishop of Juneau and was elevated to archbishop of the Archdiocese of Anchorage in 1976. He served a quarter century in that role until 2001. Archbishop Hurley remained active in the life of Alaska’s Catholics until his death. He had a remarkable career that stretched 45 years.

Many come to Alaska from other places and leave a few years later because they failed to take Alaska on its terms. If there is one thing to be said about Archbishop Hurley it is that he understood what it took to be successful in our remote environment. He not only understood what it took to succeed in Alaska. He fully embraced it. He thrived on it.

No roads connect the island communities for which the auxiliary bishop of Juneau was responsible. Bishop Hurley might have stayed in Juneau and waited for his job to pass him. Instead he chose the road Alaskans would take. He learned to fly so that he could bring the church to the people, and he piloted the diocesan plane for more than 5,000 hours over the course of his career.

During his relatively brief tenure in Juneau, Archbishop Hurley created Trays on Sleights, an Alaska centric interpretation of a feeding program known as Meals on Wheels. He is responsible for three of the most important social service facilities in Anchorage; Covenant House, which serves homeless youth; the Brother Francis Shelter, which serves homeless men; and Clare House, an emergency shelter for women with children and expectant mothers.

All of these facilities exist today because Archbishop Hurley took the initiative to get them built. Near and dear to the archbishop’s heart was the “Joy Community,” which helped Catholics with developmental disabilities prepare to receive the sacraments. And again, and again, for many legacies he has left around the State. He also founded two Catholic newspapers: the Inside Passage in Juneau and the Catholic Anchor in Anchorage.

You might ask why Archbishop Hurley, who was still part of a day’s work for a Catholic bishop, but understand that Alaska is a very young State and lacks the infrastructure of more established provinces. What Archbishop Hurley did is identify the gaps in the social safety net and move forward with a single-minded determination to fill them.

Archbishop Hurley’s contributions were international in scope. In December 1990, he traveled with Father Michael Shields to Saragadan—a city in the Russian far east. In a theater, they offered Christmas mass—the first public mass in the city’s history. Three hundred people attended.

In the following 3 weeks, signatures were secured to create a new church, and on January 4, 1991, the Church of the Nativity of Jesus was founded. Across the years, Archbishop Hurley traveled there nine times and, on January 14, 2001, celebrated the parish’s 10th anniversary.

As you can see, Archbishop Hurley’s contributions were quite substantial. Yet he was much more than what he did. Archbishop Hurley was beloved for whom he was. He was a charming man with a tremendous sense of humor and a knack for remembering names. He was an engaging conversationalist. At times, it seemed like he was everywhere: at baptisms, at funerals, engaging the whole life of the community, tending to the needs of the homeless and the troubled. From the moment he came to Alaska, Archbishop Hurley was a man in motion, and even in retirement, he never slowed down.

Archbishop Hurley, respected by people of all faiths, was truly a central figure in the spiritual lives of Alaskans for nearly a half century. Every time I pass one of the churches that were built on his watch or the social services facilities he inspired, I will smile and reflect on how blessed I was to know him.

CONGRATULATING VERMONT ESSAY WINNERS
• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, since 2010 I have sponsored a State of the Union essay contest for Vermont students. The contest, now in its sixth year, is an opportunity for Vermont’s high school students to articulate what they would do if they were President of the United States. A panel of Vermont teachers reviewed all of the essays submitted and selected the top 20. I am proud to say that nearly 800 students wrote essays for this year’s State of the Union.

I would like to congratulate each and every finalist and to specifically acknowledge Meredith Holbrook as this year’s winner of the contest. I would also like to recognize Vivian Huang for placing second and Ryan Racicot for placing third. I ask to have printed in the RECORD copies of the winning essays.

The material follows:

MEREDITH HOLBROOK, MILTON HIGH SCHOOL (WINNER)

My fellow Americans, today the United States has the strongest military in the world. Our nation has the number one economy. We have the most democratic government in history. If we want to be considered the greatest in the world, the home of the free, the land of opportunity, then we must face the challenges before us.

In 2014, 48.1 million Americans lived in food insecure homes, of this, 15.3 million were children. This equates to 14 percent of house-holds being food insecure. We are the wealthiest nation in the world, unable to feed its hungry? We have the full capability of providing for those in need. We should not allow politics to stop us from caring for our citizens in need. It is impossible to expect the people of this country to be functioning members of society without adequate nourishment. The solution to this problem is simple: feed America’s hungry. I believe that if we were to create a cabinet level agency dedicated specifically to food-insecurity, we could be bettering the Good of America. Devoting ten billion dollars from the federal budget would make a tremendous improvement in the number of food-insecure homes. It may be a bold move, but our nation cannot move forward until our people are no longer hungry.

Longer term, hunger is homelessness. On one given night in America, about 560,000 citizens are homeless, and about 200,000 of those people are in families. It should be the basic right of our people to be able to acquire a job. If people had the ability to acquire a job, they would not be as many people sleeping on the streets. In order to make this happen, we must have more people trained in the expertise of job counseling, and more programs helping to aid homeless citizens. Again, this means funding small cost to pay to get Americans off the streets.

How a nation treats its elderly says a lot about its character. We will not be a nation that ignores the needs of its seniors. Today, many seniors cannot comfortably retire. They are often forced to choose between
paying for food or, paying for medication. They will go without heat because they cannot afford to buy fuel. The source of this issue is Social Security. Although this reIRCLE, it needs to be noted that Social Security often does not change with inflation, or does not change enough to account for increased prices. As the cost of living rises, Social Security is not keeping up. This leaves seniors to make difficult choices regarding spending. Every year, Social Security should be reassessed accordingly to the cost of living. To pay for this, we would need to raise the Social Security tax percentage to seven percent. This would allow America to adequately protect those in need.

This nation is nowhere near perfect. We have many issues we must address, domestic and foreign. We cannot expect to properly address issues overseas, until we fix the home we live in. We must fix America from within. Once we do this, we will truly be able to call ourselves the greatest nation in the world.

VIVIAN HUANG, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL (SECOND PLACE)

The year of 2015 has been historic for the United States of America. We have signed a landmark climate change agreement, enacted marriage equality, and become economically sound—marking greater economic growth rates than predicted and reaching a five percent growth rate. Social Security enters the year of 2016 with two pressing issues remaining on the global and the national scale: terrorism and healthcare. As we tackle these issues, we must remind ourselves that the United States of America is truly one nation, indivisible, with each citizen carrying responsibilities to support our nation, just as one another.

First, following recent acts of terror around the world, it is top-priority for the United States to defeat the threat of ISIS. Enough is enough. Rest assured that rather than sending our troops to combat zones in Iraq and Syria, we will take an active role in helping our European allies lead the way. America must provide rigorous train-and-assist programs for Kurdish forces, exert a tight grip on ISIS-controlled territory, cut off supply lines, and urge the Gulf States to cooperate. Furthermore, recent experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have revealed that merely destroying one source of terrorism is not enough. To ultimately render counterterrorism and military action unnecessary in Iraq and Syria, we plan on developing political, economic, and educational systems that will effectively respond to complex sectarian and ethnic divisions in the region.

Let’s make it clear that the United States is not declaring a war against religion, but rather against the violence of extremism. As human beings, it is our responsibility to help the innocent Syrian families fleeing ISIS and Assad’s regime. Now is not the time to turn our backs, but to provide humanitarian aid and shelter, even though it requires extreme vigilance. Additionally, every American must confront the problem of bigotry, which only becomes exploited by ISIS for its own recruitment. We all have the duty to stand up against discriminatory rhetoric and hostile actions. We all have the duty to uphold the country’s values by supporting each other—our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and fellow community members—and respect them.

Second, an important issue on the domestic front continues to be healthcare. Physical and mental wellness is a fundamental need for all people. Over the year, the Affordable Care Act has improved access to this basic human right for the uninsured. However, there is more to accomplish in 2016. Until completely comprehensively universal healthcare—namely, a single-payer system—is set into place, Medicaid and Medicare programs must continue to go. As such, community health clinics must be placed in underserved locations.

The Department of Health and Human Services have stated the three drivers of healthcare costs: hospital expenditures, physicians and clinical services, and skyrocketing drug prices escalate the national healthcare expenses. According to the problem, a single-payer healthcare system will minimize unnecessary spending by requiring hospitals to operate on government-approved drug prices. Therefore, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies will not be able to overcharge patients and run extortionate monopolies on essential medications.

Indeed, American citizens’ rugged bravery, wise judgment, and drive for excellence have made this country great. But we can always progress forward, as long we stand united. Therefore, we will tackle the urgent issues of terrorism and healthcare not only with confidence, but also with the ambition to remain one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RYAN RACICOT, MILTON HIGH SCHOOL (THIRD PLACE)

The most pressing and immediate danger of today is the warming climate. The scientific community agrees virtually unanimously, that climate change is a very real and imminent concern. Continuation down the current path at this pace will eventually result in the ultimate demise of the human race. This is not the United States’ to tackle alone. In order to fully reverse the effects of climate change, it will take a worldwide collaborative effort unlike anything the world has ever faced before. The United States’ role going forward is to set an example for other first world countries. The United Nations’ conference this year in Paris was a step in the right direction. But the United States needs to agree to a binding commitment to reduce emissions. Without a whole-hearted promise to abide to these regulations, the United States will not be taken seriously on this issue.


To convert all factories to updated standards for emissions, a large amount of money will be needed initially, but over time, a system in which clean energy is valued more than profit will result in a much more sustainable economy. Companies who destroy the environment and experience greater profit as a result will be forced to pay for their own pollution management systems. Greatly increasing taxes on environmentally irresponsible corporations will make clean energy more profitable than polluting means of energy. This is not stealing money from the American people or a redistribution of wealth. This is using money made from irresponsible companies at the expense of the environment to help fix the problem they themselves helped to create.

Moreover, by taking the charge on creating environmentally friendly products and machinery, the potential for the United States to make a profit is huge. By incentivizing our country to make money by reducing, and selling the materials and means to do so creates jobs and income, which boosts the U.S. economy, all without destroying the environment.

Unlike many other issues troubling the state of Vermont, the nation, and the world, climate change affects every single person. Regardless of race, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, religion, education or political affiliation, climate change affects all, especially the most disadvantaged. Because of this, it is everyone’s responsibility to do their part in saving the planet. One cannot stand idle and expect other people do all of the dirty work. Helping to save the earth is not about how you can benefit, it is about how you can help the greater cause. We can no longer allow large corporations to prioritize making a profit over responsible waste management. The short-term profits for the rich are vastly outweighed by the long-term environmental consequences felt by all.

TRIBUTE TO TERESA THOMPSON

● Mr. THUNE, Mr. President, today I recognize Teresa Thompson, an intern at Black Hills State University where she is majoring in history. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her experience while also raising her two children, Ben and Rachel.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Teresa Thompson for all of the hard work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT OF THE VETO OF S.J. RES. 22, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF ‘WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES’ UNDER THE FISHER PROPRIETARY WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT, RECEIVED ON JANUARY 19, 2016—PM 37

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, signed by the President, and placed upon the journal, and held at the desk:

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S.J. Res. 22, a resolution that would nullify a rule issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and the
Department of the Army to clarify the jurisdictional boundaries of the Clean Water Act. The rule, which is a product of extensive public involvement and years of work, is critical to our efforts to protect the Nation’s waters and keep them clean; is responsive to calls for rulemaking from the Congress, industry, and community stakeholders; and is consistent with decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

We must protect the waters that are vital for the health of our communities and our waterways, including agriculture, and energy development. As I have noted before, too many of our waters have been left vulnerable. Pollution from upstream sources ends up in the rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and coastal waters near which most Americans live and on which they depend for their drinking water, recreation, and economic development. Clarifying the scope of the Clean Water Act helps to protect these resources and safeguard public health. Because this resolution seeks to block the progress represented by this rule and deny businesses and communities the regulatory certainty and clarity needed to invest in projects that rely on clean water, I cannot support it. I am therefore vetoing this resolution.

BARACK OBAMA.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following joint resolution was read the first time:
S.J. Res. 29. Joint resolution to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and its associated forces.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–4129. A communication from the Administrator, Rural Housing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grants” (RIN05753–AD02) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4130. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), transmitting proposed legislation entitled “Military Justice Act of 2016”; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4131. A communication from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Energy, Installations, and Environment), Department of Defense, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4142. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Removal of Transferred OTS Regulations Regarding Management Official Interlocks and Amendments to FDIC’s Rules and Regulations” (RIN 3052–AA39) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4132. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Members of Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation” (RIN 1495–AA41) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016, to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4134. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Suspension of Community Eligibility” (44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0001) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4135. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Suspension of Community Eligibility” (44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0081) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4136. A communication from the Regulatory Liaison, Office of Natural Resources Revenue, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Allotment of Allocated Surplus of Royalties, Rentals, and Bonuses—Oil and Gas, Offshore” (RIN1012–AA11) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.


EC–4138. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, reports entitled “Report to the Congress: 2015 Compact Impact Analysis” and “Impact of the Compacts of Free Association: 2015 Compact Impact Analysis” (RIN1910–AA78) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4139. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Charleston Harbor Post–45 project in Charleston, South Carolina; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4140. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Leon Creek Watershed, San Antonio, Texas; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4141. A communication from the Chief of the Branch of Recovery and State Grants, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removal of the Species Sucker and Two Lion Subspecies” (RIN1018–BA29) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4142. A communication from the Chief of the Foreign Species Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Listing Two Lion Subspecies” (RIN1018–BA29) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4143. A communication from the Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removal of Frankenia johnstoni (Johnston’s frankenia) From the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Plants” (RIN1911–BA77) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4144. A communication from the Chief of the Aquatic Invasive Species Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Injurious Wildlife Species: Listing Salmonanders Due to Risk of Spread Caused by Chytrid Fungus (Dicheloblastus faber)” (RIN1016–BA77) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4145. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revenue Procedure: Update of CC: International No-Rule Revenue Procedure 2015–7” (Rev. Proc. 2016–7) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4146. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revenue Procedure 2015–6” (Rev. Proc. 2016–6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4147. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revenue Procedure 2016–5” (Rev. Proc. 2016–5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4148. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Suspension of Community Eligibility” ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0081) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4149. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Suspension of Community Eligibility” ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0081) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4150. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removal of Frankenia johnstoni (Johnston’s frankenia) From the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Plants” (RIN1911–BA77) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4151. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revenue Procedure 2016–5” (Rev. Proc. 2016–5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4152. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Suspension of Community Eligibility” ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0081) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4153. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revenue Procedure 2016–5” (Rev. Proc. 2016–5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.
EC–4149. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Notice of Increase in Excludable Transit Benefits” (Notice 2016–6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4150. A communication from the Chief of the Commercial Regulations Branch, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Prohibition of Importations Imposed on Archaeological Material Originating in Italy and Representing the Pre-Classical, Classical, and Imperial Roman Periods” (RIN0648–AF29) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4151. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2016–0011–2016–0011); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4153. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Status Report and Proposed Distribution of Dc Auditor Recommendations”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4154. A communication from the Chair of the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Federal’s annual report for 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4155. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Other Hook-and-Line Fishery by Catcher Vessels in the Gulf of Alaska; Other Hook-and-Line Fishery; Seabird Avoidance Measures” (RIN0648–XE38) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4156. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Boundary Expansion of Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary; Final Environmental Impact Statement; Final Rule; Notice of Final Rule” (RIN0648–BE91) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4157. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Seabird Avoidance Measures in the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Other Hook-and-Line Fishery by Catcher Vessels in the Gulf of Alaska” (RIN0648–XE38) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4158. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Seabird Avoidance Measures in the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Other Hook-and-Line Fishery by Catcher Vessels in the Gulf of Alaska” (RIN0648–XE38) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.
EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*Michael Joseph Missal, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee’s commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before an unconstitutionally constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2448. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to remove limitations on the ability of certain dual citizens from participating in the Visa Waiver Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. JOHNSTON, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 2490. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to address administrative leave for Federal employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 2451. A bill to designate the area between the intersections of International Drive, Northwest and Van Ness Street, Northwest and International Drive, Northwest and International Place, Northwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as “Liu Xiaobo Plaza”, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MURPHY:

S. 2452. A bill to prohibit the use of funds to make payments to Iran relating to the settlement of claims brought before the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal until the use of United States Armed Forces in Iraq and the Levant and its associated forces; read the first time.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. RUIJO (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. RISCH):

S. Res. 346. A resolution expressing opposition to the European Commission interpretative notice regarding labeling Israeli products and goods manufactured in the West Bank and other areas, as such actions undermine the Israeli-Palestinian peace process; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Ms. MUKULSKY, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WARNER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. COONS):

S. Res. 347. A resolution honoring the memory and legacy of Anita Ashok Datar and condemning the terrorist attack in Bamako, Mali, on November 20, 2015; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mr. ROY)

S. Con. Res. 28. A concurrent resolution to establish the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies for the inauguration of the President-elect and Vice President-elect of the United States on January 20, 2017; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mr. ROY):

S. Con. Res. 29. A concurrent resolution to authorize the use of the rotunda and Emancipation Hall of the Capitol by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies in connection with the proceedings and ceremonies conducted for the inauguration of the President-elect and the Vice President-elect of the United States; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 383

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 383, a bill to provide for Indian trust asset management reform, and for other purposes.

S. 428

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 428, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide for 12-month continuous enrollment under Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

S. 551

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 551, a bill to increase public safety by permitting the Attorney General to deny the transfer of firearms or the issuance of firearms and explosives licenses to known or suspected dangerous terrorists.

S. 624

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 624, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 720, a bill to promote energy savings in residential buildings and industry, and for other purposes.

S. 859

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 859, a bill to protect the public, communities across America, and the environment by increasing the safety of crude oil transportation by railroad, and for other purposes.

S. 1061

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1061, a bill to improve the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 1473

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1473, a bill to authorize the appropriation of funds to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for conducting or supporting research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention.

S. 1567

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1567, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for a review of the characterization or terms of discharge from the Armed Forces of individuals with mental health disorders alleged to affect terms of discharge.

S. 1700

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1700, a bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to review the discharge characterization of former members of the
Armed Forces who were discharged by reason of the sexual orientation of the member, and for other purposes.

S. 1855

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. Boxer) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1855, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to improve the provision of assistance and benefits to veterans who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or occupying temporary housing, and for other purposes.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. Hatch, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. Whitehouse) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. Graham) were added as cosponsors of S. 1890, a bill to amend section 90 of title 18, United States Code, to provide Federal jurisdiction as a civil cause of action for trade secrets, and for other purposes.

S. 1911

At the request of Ms. Collins, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. Moran) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. Murphy) were added as cosponsors of S. 1911, a bill to expedite policies to end preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths globally.

S. 2236

At the request of Mr. Gardner, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. Manchin) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2236, a bill to improve the enforcement of sanctions against the Government of North Korea, and for other purposes.

S. 2241

At the request of Mrs. Heitkamp, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. Durbin) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2241, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the fight against breast cancer.

S. 2236

At the request of Mr. Cory, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. Lee) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2236, a bill to provide that silencers be treated the same as long guns.

S. 2271

At the request of Ms. Stabenow, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. Baldwin) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2271, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide credits for the production of renewable chemicals and investments in renewable chemical production facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 2292

At the request of Mr. Tester, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. Ayotte) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2292, a bill to reform laws relating to small public housing agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 2311

At the request of Mrs. Gillibrand, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. Murphy) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2311, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, to make grants to States for screening and treatment for maternal depression.

S. 2322

At the request of Mr. Schumer, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. Markey) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2322, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide that over-the-road bus drivers are covered under the maximum hours requirements.

S. 2429

At the request of Mr. Gardner, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. Boozman), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. Baldwin) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. Thune) were added as cosponsors of S. 2429, a bill to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan in the International Criminal Police Organization, and for other purposes.

S. 2434

At the request of Ms. Ayotte, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. Boozman) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2434, a bill to require a report on the military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program and to prohibit the provision of assistance to Iran until Iran has verifiably ended all military dimensions of its nuclear program, and for other purposes.

S. 2435

At the request of Mr. Paul, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. Fischer) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2434, a bill to provide that any executive action that infringes on the powers and duties of Congress under section 8 of article I of the Constitution of the United States or on the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States has no force or effect, and to prohibit the use of funds for certain purposes.

S. 2438

At the request of Mr. Brown, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. Warren) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2438, a bill to amend titles XI and XIX of the Social Security Act to establish a comprehensive and nationwide system to evaluate the quality of care provided to beneficiaries of Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program and to provide incentives for voluntary quality improvement.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. McConnell (for himself, Mr. Graham, Mr. Coats, Mr. Hatch, and Mrs. Ernst):

S. J. Res. 29. A joint resolution to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and its associated forces; read the first time.

Mr. McConnell. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the joint resolution be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the joint resolution was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. J. Res. 29

Whereas the terrorist organization referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and various other names (referred to in this joint resolution as “ISIL”) has been systematically targeting, kidnaping, and killing innocent men, women, and children throughout Iraq and Syria, continues to expand its terror influence, and is responsible for recent attacks in Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and France;

Whereas foreign fighters, undeterred by the more than 60-nation coalition operating against ISIL, continue to join the ranks of ISIL with the goal of establishing a caliphate;

Whereas, on June 19, 2014, President Barack Obama stated that “ISIL poses a threat to the Iraqi people, to the region, and to U.S. interests”;

Whereas, on August 19, 2014, ISIL released a video of the beheading of an American journalist, James Foley, and threatened to kill more Americans;

Whereas, on September 2, 2014, ISIL released a second video, of the beheading of an Israeli-American journalist, Steven Sotloff, and again threatened to kill more Americans;

Whereas a Central Intelligence Agency assessment in September 2014 estimated that ISIL can muster as many as 31,500 fighters in Syria and Iraq alone;

Whereas, on November 16, 2014, ISIL released yet another video of militant “Jihadi John” standing over the severed head of former Army Ranger Peter Kassig;

Whereas, on November 13, 2015, ISIL carried out a coordinated attack on Paris, France, killing more than 129 people from at least 14 different countries, including American student Nohemi Gonzalez;

Whereas, on November 16, 2015, Central Intelligence Agency Director Brennan warned, following ISIL’s horrific terrorist attack in Paris, that the attack was likely “not the only operation that ISIL has in the pipeline”;

Whereas, on August 18, 2014, Pope Francis said that the international community would be justified in stopping ISIL;

Whereas, on August 21, 2014, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dempsey stated that ISIL’s apocalyptic, end-of-days strategic vision and which will eventually have to be defeated”; and

Whereas, on September 16, 2014, former Secretary of Defense Hagel testified before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate that “if left unchecked, ISIL will directly threaten our homeland and our allies.”;

Whereas, on September 17, 2014, during a hearing of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, Secretary of State Kerry stated that “ISIL must be defeated. Period. End of story.”;

Whereas, on March 13, 2015, Central Intelligence Agency Director Brennan stated, “we’ve well-armed and well-trained. Its fighters are disciplined, committed, and battle-hardened. Left unchecked, the group...
would pose a serious danger not only to Syria and Iraq, but to the wider region beyond, including the threat of attacks in the homelands of the United States and our partners.

Whereas, on July 23, 2015, Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Comey stated that "[t]he threat that ISIL presents to the United States is very different in kind, in type, in degree than al Qaeda. ISIL is not your parent’s al Qaeda. ISIL is a very different model. And by virtue of that model, it’s currently the threat that we are worried about in the homeland most of all;"

Whereas, on November 16, 2015, following the attacks on Paris, France, ISIL released a video that claims to show a "strike America at its center in Washington;"

Whereas, on November 17, 2015, former Secretary of Defense Panetta warned that countering the threat posed by ISIL "isn’t about containment. It is about defeating ISIS. I think if there’s anything we ought to understand from these last events [in Paris], it’s that we have to go to war against this brutal enemy;"

Whereas after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Congress authorized the use of military force against al Qaeda; Whereas ISIL poses a direct threat to the United States homeland that is equal to or greater than the threat posed by al Qaeda prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001;

Whereas, although nothing in this joint resolution, authorities of the President under article 2 of the Constitution of the United States, Justice Robert H. Jackson wrote in Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer, 343 U.S. 579 (1952) that "[w]hen the President acts pursuant to an express or implied authorization of Congress, his authority is at its maximum, for it includes all that is within his own right plus all that Congress can delegate;" and Whereas ISIL, through the use of social media and its online magazine, Dabiq, seeks to radicalize Americans and to inspire attacks within the homeland: Now, therefore,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE. This joint resolution may be cited as the "Authorization for Use of Military Force Against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and its Associated Forces."

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.

(a) In general.—The President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force in order to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, its associated forces, organizations, and persons, and any successor organizations.

(b) War Powers Resolution Requirement.

(1) Specific statutory authorization.—Consistent with section 5(a)(1) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1541a(1)), Congress finds that this section is intended to constitute specific statutory authorization within the meaning of section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution.

(2) Factual or other requirements.—Nothing in this joint resolution supersedes any requirement of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1541 et seq.).

SEC. 3. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) Reports.—Not less frequently than once every 60 days, the President shall submit a report to Congress on matters relevant to this joint resolution, including actions taken pursuant to the exercise of authority granted under section 2.

(b) Single consolidated report.—To the extent that the submission of any report described in subsection (a) coincides with the submission of any other report on matters relevant to this joint resolution, otherwise required to be submitted to Congress pursuant to the reporting requirements of the War Powers Resolution, all such reports may be submitted as a single consolidated report to Congress.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 346—EX-PRESSES OPPOSITION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION INTERPRETIVE NOTICE REGARDING LABELING ISRAELI PRODUCTS AND THE PALESTINIANS ACTIVATED IN THE WEST BANK AND OTHER AREAS. AS SUCH ACTIONS UNDERMINE THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE PROCESS

Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. RISCH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. Res. 346

Whereas the United States supports a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulting in two states, a democratic Jewish State of Israel, and a viable, democratic Palestinian state, living side-by-side in peace, security, and mutual recognition;

Whereas a true and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians can only be established through direct negotiations regarding outstanding issues between Israel and the recognized leadership of the Palestinian people, the Palestinian Authority;

Whereas a true and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians is in the national security interests of the United States and necessary to ensure the safety and security of Israel;

Whereas the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement has called on the European Commission to go beyond labeling guidelines and implement a ban on the import of products of Israeli companies that operate in the West Bank and other areas;

Whereas politically motivated acts of boycott, divestment from, and sanctions against Israel represent a concerted effort to extract concessions from Israel outside of direct negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, and undermine efforts to achieve a negotiated two-state solution;

Whereas the United States has long opposed efforts to impose solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict outside of direct negotiations between the two parties;

Whereas the United States has historically been at the forefront economic pressure against Israel and has enacted legislation to counter both the Arab League Boycott of Israel and the BDS movement;

Whereas one-sided actions, such as singling out Israeli products, serves to encourage and prompt consumers to boycott Israeli products and goods manufactured in the West Bank and other areas;

Whereas section 102(b) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (title I of Public Law 114-22, 104 Cong. 2015) of the United States should discourage potential trading partners from adopting policies to limit trade or investment relations with Israel when facilitating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with European countries;

Whereas the United States and the European Union have historically worked in coordination to bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and

Whereas multiple United States legislatures have enacted measures to confront politically motivated acts of boycott, divestment from, and sanctions against Israel, including Tennessee, South Carolina, and New York: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) opposes politically motivated acts of boycott, divestment from, and sanctions against Israel or Israeli-controlled territory;

(2) opposes politically motivated acts of boycott, divestment from, and sanctions against Israel or Israeli-controlled territory;

(3) calls upon the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament to oppose any boycott, divestment, or sanctions initiatives aimed at singling out Israel, to refrain from actions counterproductive to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and to work on bringing the parties back to the negotiating table;

(4) encourages European Union member states to exert prudence in the implementation of the European Union labeling guidelines regarding Israeli products manufactured in the West Bank and other areas;

(5) urges the President to increase the use of the voice, vote, and influence of the United States in international organizations and other appropriate international forums to actively oppose politically motivated acts of boycott, divestment from, and sanctions against Israel;

(6) supports efforts by United States State legislatures to enact measures that oppose politically motivated acts of boycott, divestment from, and sanctions against Israel;

(7) reaffirms its strong support for a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulting in two states, a democratic, Jewish State of Israel and a viable, democratic Palestinian state, living side-by-side in peace, security, and mutual recognition.

SENATE RESOLUTION 347—HON-ORING THE MEMORY AND LEG-ACY OF ANITA ASHOK DATAR AND CONDEMNING THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN BAMAKO, MALI, ON NOVEMBER 20, 2015

Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WARNER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. Res. 347

Whereas, on November 20, 2015, terrorists perpetrated an horrific attack at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako, Mali, killing innocent civilians from 7 countries, including Mali, Russia, China, Belgium, Israel, Senegal, and the United States;

Whereas Anita Ashok Datar was the only citizen of the United States killed in the terrorist attack on November 20, 2015, in Bamako, Mali;

Whereas first responders, including Malian forces, United Nations staff, and French and U.S. security personnel, including agents of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, bravely and quickly assisted with—
(1) the evacuation of hostages; and
(2) the transportation of hostages to safe locations;
Whereas Anita Ashok Datar—
(1) resided in Takoma Park, Maryland;
(2) was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts; and
(3) was raised in Flanders, New Jersey;
Whereas Anita Ashok Datar was an international public health and development worker; public health expert, mother, daughter, sister, and friend;
Whereas Anita Ashok Datar served as a volunteer of the Peace Corps in Senegal from 1997 through 1999;
Whereas Anita Ashok Datar was a graduate of—
(1) Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; and
(2) Columbia University’s—
(A) Mailman School of Public Health; and
(B) School of International and Public Affairs;
Whereas Anita Ashok Datar helped found a not-for-profit organization dedicated to connecting low-income women in underserved communities to quality health services;
Whereas, of all of the accomplishments of Anita Ashok Datar, she was most proud of her sister, and friend;
Whereas the people of the United States stand united with the family, friends, and colleagues of Anita Ashok Datar—
(1) to support the individuals touched by her life or affected by her death; and
(2) to pray for healing, understanding, and peace; Now, therefore, be it
Resolved, That the Senate—
(1) condemns the terrorist attack in Bamako, Mali, on November 20, 2015;
(2) honors the memory of Anita Ashok Datar, the citizen of the United States that was killed in the terrorist attack on November 20, 2015, in Bamako, Mali;
(3) recognizes and honors the commitment of Anita Ashok Datar to advance international development and public health, including her work to connect low-income women to quality health services;
(4) extends heartfelt condolences and prayers to—
(A) the family, friends, and colleagues of Anita Ashok Datar, particularly her son, Rohan; and
(B) the individuals touched by the life of Anita Ashok Datar or affected by her death, including the dedicated development professionals and volunteers that continue to selflessly engage in critical humanitarian and development efforts; and
(5) pledges to continue to work to counter violent extremism, including through education and health care, in the United States and abroad.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 28—TO ESTABLISH THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES FOR THE INAUGURATION OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT AND VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT OF THE UNITED STATES ON JANUARY 20, 2017

Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mr. SCHUMER) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 28
Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT COMMITTEE.
There is established a Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (in this resolution referred to as the “joint committee”) consisting of 3 Senators and 3 Members of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively. The joint committee is authorized to make the necessary arrangements for the inauguration of the President-elect and Vice President-elect of the United States on January 20, 2017.

SEC. 2. SUPPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE.
The joint committee—
(1) is authorized to utilize appropriate equipment and the services of appropriate personnel of departments and agencies of the Federal Government, under arrangements between the joint committee and the heads of those departments and agencies, in connection with the inaugural proceedings and ceremonies; and
(2) may accept gifts and donations of goods and services to carry out its responsibilities.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS
SA 2945. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4038, to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be completed prior to the admission of certain aliens as refugees, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 3. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT VETO AUTHORITY.
(a) In General.—The governor of any State may veto the resettlement of any refugee in that State.

SA 2946. Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4038, to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be completed prior to the admission of certain aliens as refugees, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 3. INADMISSIBILITY FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE TERRORISM.
(a) In General.—Section 212(a)(3)(B)(i)(VII) of the Immigration and
Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3)(B)(i)(VII)) is amended by inserting ‘‘, including through the use of social media’’ before the semicolon at the end.

(b) Rulemaking.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall issue regulations in accordance with section 553 of title 5, United States Code, to ensure that every covered alien who has violated section 212(a)(3)(B)(i)(VII) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3)(B)(i)(VII))—

(1) does not receive an immigrant visa under section 203 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153); and

(2) is not a lawful permanent resident under section 203 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153); or

(3) is a foreigner who is admitted for the purpose of being granted asylum under section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1158).

(c) Effective date.—The regulations issued under subsection (b) shall take effect on the date that is 30 days after the date on which such regulations are published in the Federal Register.

SEC. 4. Definitions.

(a) In general.—In this Act:

(1) appropriate congressional committees means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate;

(B) the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate;

(D) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(E) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

(F) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(G) the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives;

(H) the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives;

(I) the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives;

(J) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives;

(K) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(L) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(b) covered alien means any alien who—

(A) is applying for admission to the United States as a refugee; and

(B) is a national or resident of Iraq or Syria;

(i) has no known nationality and whose last habitual residence was in Iraq or Syria; or

(ii) has been present in Iraq or in Syria at any time on or after March 1, 2011.

(c) is not a citizen of Iraq who—

(i) is or was employed by or on behalf of the United States Government in Iraq or on or after March 20, 2003, for not less than 1 year; and

(ii) provided faithful and valuable service to the United States Government, which is documented in a positive recommendation or evaluation described in subsection (c), from the employer’s senior supervisor in the United States Government or from a more senior person if the employee’s senior supervisor cannot be located.

(d) is not the spouse or child of an alien described in subparagraph (B); and

(e) is not an infant child without living parents who is younger than 4 years of age, as certified under procedures promulgated by the Secretary of State under subsection (b).

(f) appropriate organization means—

The term ‘‘foreign terrorist organization’’ is a foreign organization that is designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)).

(b) Certification.—(1) In general.—The Secretary of State shall issue regulations establishing procedures for certifying that an alien is an alien child without living parents who is younger than 4 years of age, as described in subsection (a)(2)(A).

(2) Submission.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit the regulations issued under paragraph (1) to the appropriate congressional committees.

(3) Implementation.—Not later than 90 days after the submission of regulations under paragraph (2), the Secretary of State shall implement the regulations issued under paragraph (1) as follows:

(c) Approval by Chief of Mission Required.—Each recommendation or evaluation required under subsection (a)(2)(B) shall be accompanied by approval from the appropriate Chief of Mission, or his or her designee, who shall conduct a risk assessment of the applicant and an independent review of records maintained by the United States Government or hiring organization or entity to confirm the alien’s employment and faithfulness to the United States Government before the alien is exempted from definition of covered alien under subsection (a)(2)(B).

SA 2948. Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 202, to require that supplemental certifications and background investigations be completed prior to the admission of certain aliens as refugees, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

SEC. 3. STATE NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT. Section 412(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1522(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

‘‘(c) the alien has not been present’’; and

SEC. 4. ELIMINATION OF EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN DUAL NATIONALS FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM.

(a) Short title.—This section may be cited as the ‘‘Equal Protection in Travel Act of 2016’’.

(b) Visa Waiver Program.—Section 217(a)(12) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1187(a)(12)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking clause (ii);

(B) by striking ‘‘(C)’’ and all that follows through ‘‘the alien has not been present’’ and inserting ‘‘(C), the alien has not been present’’; and

(C) by redesignating subclauses (I), (II), and (III) as clauses (I), (ii), and (iii), respectively; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ‘‘(A)(i)’’ and inserting ‘‘(A)’’.

SEC. 5. FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

(a) Extension.—Section 415 of the Medicare Rural Community Hospital Demonstration Program (Public Law 100–203; 42 U.S.C. 1395ww note), as amended by sections 3123 and 10033 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–144), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5), by striking ‘‘5-year extension period’’ and inserting ‘‘10-year extension period’’; and

(2) in subsection (g), by striking ‘‘Five-Year’’ and inserting ‘‘Ten-Year’’.

(b) In section 415 of the Medicare Rural Community Hospital Demonstration Program (Public Law 100–203; 42 U.S.C. 1395ww note), as amended by sections 3123 and 10033 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–144), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5), by striking ‘‘5-year extension period’’ and inserting ‘‘10-year extension period’’; and

(2) in subsection (g), by striking ‘‘Five-Year’’ and inserting ‘‘Ten-Year’’.
(C) by striking “5-year extension period” and inserting “10-year extension period” each place it appears; 
(D) in paragraph (4)(B)—
(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting “each 5-year period in” after “hospital during” and;
(ii) in clause (i), by inserting “each applicable 5-year period in” after “the first day of”; and 
(E) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:
“(6) EXPANSION OF DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM TO RURAL AREAS IN ANY STATE.—
“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, notwithstanding subsection (a)(2) or paragraph (2) of this subsection, not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, select for participation in the demonstration program under this section for the second 5 years of the 10-year extension period without exceeding the limitation under paragraph (3) of this subsection.
“(B) Priorities.—In determining which rural community hospitals that submitted an application pursuant to the solicitation under subparagraph (A) to select for participation in the demonstration program, the Secretary—
“(i) shall give priority to rural community hospitals located in one of the 20 States with the largest population densities as determined by the Secretary using the 2015 Statistical Abstract of the United States; and
“(ii) may consider—
“(I) closures of hospitals located in rural areas in the State in which the rural community hospital is located during the 5-year period immediately preceding the date of enactment of this paragraph; and
“(II) the population density of the State in which the rural community hospital is located.

(b) CHANGE IN TIMING FOR REPORT.—Subsection (e) of such section 410A is amended—
(1) by striking “Not later than 6 months after the completion of the demonstration program” and inserting “Not later than August 1, 2016”; and
(2) by striking “such program” and inserting “the demonstration program under this section”.

NOTE OF HEARING
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS
Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet during the session of the Senate on January 20, 2016, at 10 a.m. in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled “Generic Drug User Fee Amendments: Accelerating Patient Access to Generic Drugs

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Jamie Garden of the committee staff on (202) 224-0623.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 20, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room 328A of the Russell Senate Office Building.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 20, 2016, at 9:30 a.m. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
Mr. VITTER. 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 January 20, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SR-235 of the Russell Senate Office Building.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 20, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD-406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 20, 2016, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “The Middle East after the JCPOA.”
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS
Mr. VITTER. 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 on January 20, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD-403 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled “Improving the Federal Response to Challenges in Mental Health Care in America.”
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
EXECUTIVE CALENDAR
Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 440.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
The clerk will report the nomination.
The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lisa S. Disbrow, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of the Air Force.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Disbrow nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion 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 nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the Record; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

### RURAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL DEMONSTRATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 181, S. 607.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following:

A bill (S. 607) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a five-year extension of the rural community hospital demonstration program, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Finance, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Rural Community Hospital Demonstration Extension Act of 2015”.

**SEC. 2. FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.**

(a) **Extension.—** Section 410A of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–173; 42 U.S.C. 1395ww note), as amended by sections 3123 and 10313 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5), by striking “5-year extension period” and inserting “10-year extension period”; and

(2) in subsection (g)—

(A) in the subsection heading, by striking “FIVE-YEAR” and inserting “TEN-YEAR”; and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “additional 5-year” and inserting “additional 10-year”; and

(C) by striking “10-year extension period” and inserting “10-year extension period” each place it appears;

(D) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, each hospital that was participating in the demonstration program under this section.”

(E) in paragraph (4)(B)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting “each 5-year period in” after “hospital during”; and

(ii) in clause (i), by inserting “each applicable 5-year period in” after “hospital during”;

(F) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) OTHER HOSPITALS IN DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.—During the second 5 years of the 10-year extension period, the Secretary shall apply the provisions of paragraph (4) to rural community hospitals that are not described in paragraph (4) but are participating in the demonstration program under this section as of December 30, 2014, in a similar manner as such provisions apply to rural community hospitals described in paragraph (4).”.

(b) **CHANGE IN TIMING FOR REPORT.—** Subsection (e) of such section 410A is amended by striking “Not later than 6 months after the completion” and inserting “Not later than August 1, 2018.”

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Grassley amendment at the desk be agreed to; that the committee-reported amendment, as amended, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; that the title amendment be agreed to; and that the motions to recommit be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 2952) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike section 2 and insert the following:

**SEC. 2. FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.**

(a) **Extension.—** Section 410A of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–173; 42 U.S.C. 1395ww note), as amended by sections 3123 and 10313 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5), by striking “5-year extension period” and inserting “10-year extension period”; and

(2) in subsection (g)—

(A) in the subsection heading, by striking “FIVE-YEAR” and inserting “TEN-YEAR”; and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “additional 5-year” and inserting “additional 10-year”; and

(C) by striking “10-year extension period” and inserting “10-year extension period” each place it appears;

(D) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, issue a solicitation for applications to select up to the maximum number of additional rural community hospitals located in any State to participate in the demonstration program under this section for the second 5 years of the 10-year extension period without exceeding the limitation under paragraph (3) of this subsection.”

(b) **Priorities.—** In determining which rural community hospitals will be invited to submit an application pursuant to the solicitation under subparagraph (A) to select for participation in the demonstration program, the Secretary—

(i) shall give priority to rural community hospitals located in one of the 20 States with the lowest population densities (as determined by the Secretary by using the 2015 Statistical Abstract of the United States); and

(ii) may consider—

(I) closures of hospitals located in rural areas in the State in which the rural community hospital is located during the 5-year period immediately preceding the date of the enactment of this paragraph; and

(II) the population density of the State in which the rural community hospital is located.

(c) **Change in Timing for Report.—** Subsection (e) of such section 410A is amended—

(1) by striking “Not later than 6 months after the completion” and inserting “Not later than August 1, 2018”;

(2) by striking “such program” and inserting “the demonstration program under this section”.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 607), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 607

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled...*
Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 2422) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 2422) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

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 “Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Veterans Affairs Seismic Safety and Construction Authorization Act.”

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF CERTAIN MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016, which was passed by the Senate on November 10, 2015, without a single vote cast against the bill, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, to the following amounts to be appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs:

   (A) $35,000,000 to make seismic corrections to Building 133 at the West Los Angeles Medical Center of the Department in Los Angeles, California, which, according to the Department, is a building that is designated as having an extremely high risk of sustaining substantial damage or collapsing during an earthquake.

   (B) $5,000,000 to provide for the construction of a new research building, site work, and demolition at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

   (C) $161,000,000 to replace Building 133 with a new community living center at the Long Beach Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which, according to the Department, is a building that is designated as having an extremely high risk of sustaining major damage during an earthquake.

   (D) $468,800,000 for construction projects that are critical to the Department for ensuring health care access and safety at medical facilities in Louisville, Kentucky, Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, Missouri, Perry Point, near Indian Creek, Maryland, Beavertail in the Beavertail Marine Reserve in Alameda, California, and Livermore, California.

   (2) The Department is unable to obligate or expend the amounts described in paragraphs (1), other than for construction design, because the Department lacks an explicit authorization by an Act of Congress pursuant to section 101(a) of title 38, United States Code, to carry out the major medical facility projects described in such paragraph.

   (3) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and his designee, or authorized representative, are authorized to carry out projects described in paragraph (1) and (2) of this section.

   (4) Every day that the critical seismic safety projects described in paragraph (3) are delayed increases the risk of a life-threatening building failure in the case of a major seismic event.

   (5) According to the United States Geological Survey—

      (A) California has more than a 99 percent chance of experiencing an earthquake of magnitude 6.7 or greater in the next 30 years.

      (B) Even earthquakes of lesser severity than magnitude 6.7 can cause life threatening damage to seismically unsafe buildings, and

      (C) in California, earthquakes of magnitude 6.0 or greater occur on average once every 1.2 years.

(b) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility projects, with each project to be carried out in an amount not to exceed the amount specified for that project:

   (1) Seismic corrections to buildings, including retrofitting and replacement of high-risk buildings, in San Francisco, California, in an amount not to exceed $105,500,000.

   (2) Seismic corrections to facilities, including facilities to support homeless veterans, at the medical center in West Los Angeles, California, in an amount not to exceed $237,100,000.

   (3) Seismic corrections to the mental health and community living center in Long Beach, California, in an amount not to exceed $37,352,000.

   (4) Construction of an outpatient clinic, administrative space, cemetery, and columbarium in Alameda, California, in an amount not to exceed $37,352,000.

   (5) Realignment of medical facilities in Livermore, California, in an amount not to exceed $134,340,000.

   (6) Construction of a medical center in Louisville, Kentucky, in an amount not to exceed $150,000,000.

   (7) Construction of a replacement community living center in Perry Point, Maryland, in an amount not to exceed $92,700,000.

   (8) Seismic corrections and other renovations to several buildings on the University of California campus to convert a specialty care building in American Lake, Washington, in an amount not to exceed $16,000,000.

   (9) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, and the Secretary is authorized to carry out the projects authorized in subsection (b), for the following projects:

      (1) Construction of a new community living center in Perry Point, Maryland, $1,113,802,000.

      (2) Construction of a medical center in Louisville, Kentucky, $35,000,000.

      (3) Construction of a medical center in San Francisco, California, $161,000,000.

      (4) Construction of a replacement community living center in Long Beach, California, $468,800,000.

      (5) Construction of a medical center in Livermore, California, $237,100,000.

      (6) Construction of a replacement community living center in San Francisco, California, $105,500,000.

      (7) Construction of a new community living center in Long Beach, California, $37,352,000.

      (8) Construction of an outpatient clinic, administrative space, cemetery, and columbarium in Alameda, California, $37,352,000.

      (9) Realignment of medical facilities in Livermore, California, $134,340,000.

      (10) Construction of a medical center in Louisville, Kentucky, $150,000,000.

      (11) Construction of a replacement community living center in Perry Point, Maryland, $92,700,000.

      (12) Seismic corrections and other renovations to several buildings on the University of California campus to convert a specialty care building in American Lake, Washington, $16,000,000.

   (10) LIMITATION.—The projects authorized in subsection (b) may only be carried out using—

      (1) funds appropriated for fiscal year 2016 pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (c); and

      (2) funds available for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation; and

      (3) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation; and

      (4) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation.

   (b) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility projects, with each project to be carried out in an amount not to exceed the amount specified for that project:

   (1) Seismic corrections to buildings, including retrofiting and replacement of high-risk buildings, in San Francisco, California, in an amount not to exceed $105,500,000.

   (2) Seismic corrections to facilities, including facilities to support homeless veterans, at the medical center in West Los Angeles, California, in an amount not to exceed $237,100,000.

   (3) Seismic corrections to the mental health and community living center in Long Beach, California, in an amount not to exceed $37,352,000.

   (4) Construction of an outpatient clinic, administrative space, cemetery, and columbarium in Alameda, California, in an amount not to exceed $37,352,000.

   (5) Realignment of medical facilities in Livermore, California, in an amount not to exceed $134,340,000.

   (6) Construction of a medical center in Louisville, Kentucky, in an amount not to exceed $150,000,000.

   (7) Construction of a replacement community living center in Perry Point, Maryland, in an amount not to exceed $92,700,000.

   (8) Seismic corrections and other renovations to several buildings on the University of California campus to convert a specialty care building in American Lake, Washington, in an amount not to exceed $16,000,000.

   (9) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, and the Secretary is authorized to carry out the projects authorized in subsection (b), for the following projects:

      (1) Construction of a new community living center in Perry Point, Maryland, $1,113,802,000.

      (2) Construction of a medical center in Louisville, Kentucky, $35,000,000.

      (3) Construction of a medical center in San Francisco, California, $161,000,000.

      (4) Construction of a replacement community living center in Long Beach, California, $468,800,000.

      (5) Construction of a medical center in Livermore, California, $237,100,000.

      (6) Construction of a replacement community living center in San Francisco, California, $105,500,000.

      (7) Construction of a medical center in Long Beach, California, $37,352,000.

      (8) Construction of an outpatient clinic, administrative space, cemetery, and columbarium in Alameda, California, $37,352,000.

      (9) Realignment of medical facilities in Livermore, California, $134,340,000.

      (10) Construction of a medical center in Louisville, Kentucky, $150,000,000.

      (11) Construction of a replacement community living center in Perry Point, Maryland, $92,700,000.

      (12) Seismic corrections and other renovations to several buildings on the University of California campus to convert a specialty care building in American Lake, Washington, $16,000,000.

   (10) LIMITATION.—The projects authorized in subsection (b) may only be carried out using—

      (1) funds appropriated for fiscal year 2016 pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (c); and

      (2) funds available for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation; and

      (3) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation.

      (4) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation; and

      (5) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation.
There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 28) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

SECURITY AGREEMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 29, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 29) to authorize the Rotunda and Emancipation Hall of the Capitol by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies in connection with the proceedings and ceremonies conducted for the inauguration of the President-elect and the Vice President-elect of the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 29) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S.J. RES. 29

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there is a joint resolution at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the joint resolution by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 29) to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and its associated forces.

Mr. McCONNELL. I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the joint resolution on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the joint resolution will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2016

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, January 21; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate then resume consideration of the veto message on S.J. Res. 22, with the time until 10:30 a.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:37 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, January 21, 2016, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate January 20, 2016:

LISA S. DISBROW, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE.