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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

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2016

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our rock, our strength, and our life, thank You for being our high tower and strong defense. Because of You, we can conquer all anxieties and fears, sins and follies, failures and doubts. May we never forget that our times are in Your hands.

Grant that this day our Senators will draw near to You and seek Your Divine guidance for the decisions they face. Lord, transform their lives, heal their wounds, and create in them clean hearts as You renew a right spirit within them. Fill their hearts with Your joy and give them Your peace.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION BILL AND WOTUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, next week the Senate will turn to broad, bipartisan energy legislation. The Energy Policy Modernization Act will help bring our energy policies in line with the demands of today and the opportunities of tomorrow. It will help Americans produce more energy. It will help Americans pay less for energy. It will help Americans save energy. That is what the Energy Policy Modernization Act will do. Here is what the Energy Policy Modernization Act won't do: It won't raise taxes. It won't add a dime to the deficit.

The broad Energy bill is a result of a truly bipartisan process, and it shows, which is why it was supported in committee by a vote of 18 to 4.

I look forward to debating the bipartisan Energy bill starting next week, but we won't have to wait until then to consider bipartisan legislation. We will consider a different bipartisan measure today. S.J. Res. 22 passed in November with the support of several Democratic colleagues, and it would have overturned the Obama administration's waters of the United States regulation.

Here is what our Democratic colleagues have had to say about WOTUS: A Democratic Senator from West Virginia has used phrases such as ''completely unreasonable'' and ''dangerously overreaching'' when discussing the issue. A Democratic Senator from North Dakota said that ''there is not one single regulation in the entire country that has caused more concern'' in her State. A Democratic Senator from Indiana said it was ''incredibly important'' that the rule be rewritten. That is just what the Democrats are saying.

The administration has tried to spin WOTUS as some kind of clean water measure, but a bipartisan majority of Congress understands it is really a Federal power grab clumsily masquerading as one. WOTUS would grant Federal bureaucrats dominion over nearly every piece of land that touches a pothole, ditch, or puddle. It would force the Americans who live there to ask Federal bureaucrats for permission to do just about anything with their very own property. That is why Congress sent bipartisan legislation to the President to overturn it. His decision to veto that bipartisan measure made a few things quite clear: No. 1, he apparently stands with Washington bureaucrats on this issue, not the American people. No. 2, he apparently thinks America's clean water rule should be based on Washington politics, not a scientific and truly collaborative process.

It was good to see Democratic colleagues stand with the American people when we first passed this bill. I ask the rest of the Democratic caucus to join with us now to do the right thing. Vote with us to override a veto that is about Federal power grabs and Washington politics, not clean water and the American people.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S.J. RES. 29

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a joint resolution at the desk that is due for a second reading.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the joint resolution by title for the second time.

The 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. In order to place the joint resolution on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the joint resolution will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CLEAN WATER RULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are 3 weeks into the new year, and already we are back to wasting the Senate's time to launch partisan attacks. Today my Republican colleagues have chosen to once again attack clean water protections that millions of Americans depend on.

On Tuesday President Obama vetoed the Republican attempt to roll back the clean water rule—a rule that basically restores important safeguards to shield our water sources from pollution and contamination. There are special interest groups who have tried to raise money based on this. Some of the groups who have tried to raise money on this with fallacious information are farm groups. They have gone out and said that this is terrible for agriculture. Agriculture is exempted, so anyone saying this is horrible for agriculture is simply wrong. Under the specific language of the legislation, agriculture is exempted.

The clean water rule resolves years of confusion and provides regulatory certainty for businesses, farmers, local governments, and communities. It creates no new permitting requirements and maintains all previous exemptions and exclusions.

Despite President Obama's veto, Republicans remain determined to undermine the environment. Safe water is critical to the health of our communities. One need go no further than Flint, MI, to find out that that is, in fact, the case. And it is important to our economy. At this very moment, as I have indicated, 100,000 people live in Flint, MI. All of those families—thousands of families—have been forced to worry about their children's health because of lead contamination in their drinking water. Their little brains are adversely affected by lead in the water. We have known that for a long time, but in an effort to save a buck, the Governor and others in Michigan decided they would try something else and in the process have really drastically damaged the lives of little boys and girls in Flint, MI.

Our country is the wealthiest country in the world. No American should have to worry about whether they are drinking safe water in America. It is unconscionable to think that we would waste valuable time in the Senate attacking a rule dealing with clean water designed to keep our Nation's water safe. And while we are doing this—wasting time here in the Senate today—Flint, MI, is in a state of emergency.

Republicans are so wedded to idealogical purity, they have lost touch with reality. They have somehow failed to recognize that clean water is a basic priority for all Americans. The reality is that the Federal funding and reasonable protections are necessary to ensure public health and safety.

The Governor of the State of Michigan is an anti-government person. That is his mark. He especially wants Washington to stay out of Michigan's government. But what is the first thing he does when he finds out he and his whole government have messed up the State of Michigan? He calls Washington for help. He, along with many of my friends on the other side of the aisle, disparage the Federal Government every chance they get, but when a crisis strikes, whom do they call upon to help? The Federal Government.

Rolling back clean water protections is the wrong thing to do, and Republicans should refocus their energy on solutions to keep America healthy and safe.

ANNIVERSARY OF CITIZENS UNITED DECISION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, a flood of dark money has engulfed the American political system and perverted our democracy. The voices of ordinary citizens are being drowned out by billionaires seeking to rig the system in their favor.

Americans should know that Democrats are fighting to restore their voice, which is being overshadowed by the billions of dollars being spent to push the Republican Presidential nominees, and on every level of the government, this dark money is there drowning out the voices of average Americans. Over here, we stand united in our commitment to advance the interest of the middle-class and working families. It is important to remember how we got to this point.

Yesterday I saw that the junior Senator from Florida and the former Governor of Florida have spent about $150 million so far running for President. One of them is at 10 percent in the national polls and the other is at 6 percent. But they have the money to slosh around and spend.

We got here because 6 years ago today, the Supreme Court of our great country erased a century of sound government regulations that protect the fairness and integrity of elections. It was determined during the Republican reign of Teddy Roosevelt that there was too much corporate money in American politics, and so under his leadership, it was eliminated. But the Supreme Court changed that in a very narrow decision of 5 to 4.

The disastrous Citizens United ruling opened the floodgates for these shadowy billionaires to influence our elections. Most of the spending is done in secret by special interest shell groups who refuse to disclose their donors to the American people. These billionaire donors stop at nothing to buy a government that favors them and their special interests.

There are two brothers who I believe are determined to buy America, and we will find out come election time. Maybe they have been able to do that. Charles and David Koch are shrewd business people. Their wealth is nearly unmatched anyplace in the world. They have amassed a fortune from inherited wealth that they have magnified that has come from oil, chemicals, and a lot of different places. They originally inherited this from their dad and built it into a multinational corporation. No one really knows their net worth, but some say it is $100 billion, $150 billion. No one really knows. They have become two of the wealthiest men in the entire world.

They seek more wealth, but that is not all they seek. A new book by Jane Myer—a dignified and renowned author and journalist—she reports in her book that immediately after the election of President Obama, the Koch brothers wanted to double down on what they had done before. They had been working on this for a while. They didn't like this man, Barack Obama, being President of the United States, so they gathered like-minded billionaires—it is in her book—and plotted to spend however much money it would take to get rid of him for a new term and basically undermine our democracy. You can't make up a story like this. These are the facts.

Capitalizing on the Citizens United decision, the Koch brothers have poured over $1 billion into our political system to create a country that protects the wealthiest one-half of 1 percent. The America they envision is drastically different from the vision most Americans have for our country.

I have a list of some of the things they have advocated for decades. It used to be just the fringe, but now we have people running for President who agree with him. They want to abolish Social Security, eliminate minimum wage laws, dismantle Medicare as we know it, dismantle our public education system, dismantle protections for clean air and water, create tax breaks for themselves, and they have done a pretty good job of that. They are prepared to use their enormous wealth to accomplish these goals. They really put their money where their mouth is. They spend it because they have it to spend. They have pledged to spend about $1 billion this cycle, not counting all the money they have spent in years past.

They have been involved in years past to make sure the John Birch Society had a place in our society—the libertarians. They were libertarians for a while.

The Supreme Court has paved the way for greedy robber barons—robber barons like the Koch brothers—to create a government that works for the richest of the rich.

Democracy demands that every American has an equal opportunity to have his or her voice heard. It should not be dependent upon how much money one has.

I am sorry to say our Supreme Court has determined that your voice is going to be much louder if you have a lot of money. A democratic system should give every American a fair shot, but every time we have tried to make an effort to fix our broken finance system, the Republicans have said no.

We had a DISCLOSE Act. We brought it before this body. It would have passed the House at that time. There were 59 Democrats. We needed one Republican—one Republican—to make it more apparent so that the American people could see where this money was coming from. Not one Republican would join with us.

Now, I came to the House of Representatives with the senior Senator from Arizona. I admire him. He is an American hero, despite what Donald Trump says. He proved himself in battle and in the prison system set up in Vietnam. I admire JOHN MCCAIN. I can remember him working with Russ Feingold, the Senator from Wisconsin, and they passed the McCain-Feingold legislation. It became the law of this country. It was a really good, strong step forward. Citizens United wiped that out.

My friend, the senior Senator from Arizona, had an opportunity to help this bad financial system the Supreme Court has put forward, and he didn't step forward. He decided to take a pass on it. I am very disappointed. I have never forgotten what he didn't do or what he could have done with one vote. We only needed one vote. We had 59, and we only needed 1 more.

Rather than secret political spending, we should have immediate disclosure—some disclosure. Rather than corporations buying influence, we should restore laws that limit the power of special interests. Rather than empowering the wealthy, we should encourage small contributions.

We must make clear once and for all that the United States of America is not for sale.

We criticized and complained about the Soviet Union and how it was. We were so happy when the Soviet Union fell and Russia became a ''democracy.'' Now people say that Russia is an oligarchy. What is an oligarchy? An oligarchy is a country run by a person who is controlled by wealth—the wealth of individuals and families. That is what we have in Russia, and that is what we are going to have in America if this is allowed to continue.

The Koch brothers and a few other billionaires will be in concert with—we see this line of characters running for President on the Republican ticket—it will be with them. It will be an oligarchy first class. It will match what is going on in Russia today.

We must make clear that the United States is not for sale. The Citizens United decision that we celebrate in a very adverse way today on its anniversary is bad for the country, and I hope the Supreme Court understands how bad it is for the country. It is one of the worst decisions in the history of the Supreme Court, if not the worst.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the veto message on S.J. Res. 22, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 22, a joint resolution 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 Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum, and I ask unanimous consent that the time be charged equally between the majority and the minority.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Tuesday, January 26, at 2:15 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 306; that there be 15 minutes of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, 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.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 2012

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following morning business on Tuesday, January 26, the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 218, S. 2012, with a period of debate only until 3 p.m.

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with my Republican colleagues.

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

Mr. BLUNT. Thank you, Mr. President.

We are here today to vote in about half an hour on overriding the President's veto, a congressional action that would not have allowed the country to move forward with the so-called waters of the United States rule.

The waters of the United States sounds like a lot until you look at the map beside me. This is a map of the State of Missouri and of what would be covered under EPA jurisdiction, if this rule is allowed to go into effect.

This is a map from the Missouri Farm Bureau that nobody has taken issue with, and the red part of our State would be covered by Federal Government authority. So 99.7 percent of the State would suddenly be under the jurisdiction of the EPA on all things related to water: water running off the parking lot, water running off your driveway, water running off your roof, water falling into your yard, water falling into a vacant lot if someone wants to build a house on that vacant lot—all of those things in 99.7 percent of the State. I think that three-tenths of 1 percent may be some unusual seepage area where the water runs away in a way that the EPA hasn't yet figured out how to assert jurisdiction over.

The law passed in the early 1970s, the Clean Water Act, said that the EPA would have jurisdiction over navigable waters. So, if you believe the EPA and believe this rule and believe in the President's veto, navigable waters would apparently be every drop of water in 99.7 percent of Missouri.

If the President and the administration and the EPA want to change the law where it no longer says ''navigable waters,'' but where it says virtually all the water, there is a way to do that: Introduce a bill, come to the Congress, and the Congress votes on that bill. If the House and Senate approve it—I know this sounds like it is a pretty pedestrian discussion. But apparently the President and EPA don't understand that it is the way to change the law. It is not just that somebody decides that all of the water in Missouri—or to be accurate, 99.7 percent of the water in our State, of the geography of our

State on any water issue—suddenly becomes the jurisdiction of the EPA.

I will assure you that if the EPA gets this jurisdiction, there is no way that they can do what they say the Environmental Protection Agency should do. That is the case in Missouri.

I am joined by my colleagues from North Dakota and Wyoming to talk about this. Certainly, we have been on the floor repeatedly to talk about this. We also talked about remedies. A great remedy would be that any regulation that has significant economic impact should be voted on by the Congress. It is a bill we have all co-sponsored called the REINS Act. Now the analogy here is pretty good—to put the reins on government. But what would really happen in the REINS Act is that anybody who would vote for a rule like this would have to go home and explain it. Frankly, I think anybody who doesn't override the President's veto had better be prepared to go home and explain it.

Senator BARRASSO and Senator HOEVEN have been vigorous in this fight. As to Senator HOEVEN, I know this is something that matters where he lives and where we live, but it is also a great indication of what happens when the government somehow believes that no matter what the Constitution says or what the law says, the all-knowing Federal Government should be in charge of everything everywhere—in this case, virtually all the water in the country.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, that is absolutely right. I join my distinguished colleague from the State of Missouri, as well as my colleague from the State of Wyoming and our colleague from the State of Iowa.

This is an incredibly important issue. It is probably the No. 1 regulatory relief that all business sectors need. Starting with our farmers and ranchers, this is a huge issue. This crosses all sectors because this is a big-time overreach by the EPA, and it really affects all property owners. You are talking about private property rights that are at stake here.

There is a fundamental principle at stake in terms of how our government works, as well. The EPA has taken through its own regulatory fiat additional authority that it does not legally possess. It has done so under a legal theory that it has advanced called ''significant nexus.'' Essentially, it has gone beyond the jurisdiction it has, which is regulation with regard to navigable bodies of water, such as the Missouri River, for example, to, in essence, say it can now regulate all water wherever it finds it anywhere.

Now think about that. If part of the executive branch or a regulatory agency can unilaterally say, ''You know what, we are not just going to operate under our legislative authority; we are just going to take additional authorities that we don't legally have in order to do what we think is our job,'' then we have a fundamental problem because that defies the underlying concepts of the checks and balances of our government, where the legislative, judicial, and executive all offset each other in order to protect private property rights. That is absolutely what is at stake here.

Essentially, the EPA has set a rule where they can regulate water anywhere in any capacity. So if a farmer, after a rain storm, goes out and wants to move water in a ditch, or even an individual private property owner wants to do that, do they have to apply to the EPA for a permit? How do they know? To whom do they go? Are they going to get consistent rulings? Why in the world should they be subject to an agency without legislative authority, just deciding that they are going to have jurisdiction or authority in cases where they don't have it? It is a very important principle in terms of protecting private property rights as well as the fundamental fact that it has a devastating impact on farmers, ranchers, and every sector of our society.

I would turn back to my colleague from Missouri and ask him to touch on, maybe for just a minute, what we can do about it. We are on the floor today to have a vote, and I think we need to point out how important it is that our colleagues join us in making sure that we override this Presidential veto.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I appreciate that. This is a bill that has been on the President's desk. It passed the Senate, which means that 60 Senators were supportive of this rule not being able to go forward in its current status. The President vetoed the bill. This would be a time for the Congress to stand up. If you didn't have any other interest in this fight, it is the time for the Congress to stand up and say: If you are going to change the law, the only way to change the law is for the Congress to change the law. The President appears to be willing to discover all sorts of ways that can't be found in the Constitution to change the law. But even if you were on the other side of this issue, even if you want to come to the floor of the Senate and vigorously argue that the EPA needs the jurisdiction of all the water in the country, as a Member of the Senate, the Senate should do that, the House should do that, and the Constitution should work.

Senator BARRASSO, it is clearly not working here.

''Navigable waters'' has been used in Federal law since about 1846, and until the last couple of years when the EPA asserted differently, everybody always thought they knew what that meant. If you could move something on it, navigate it, then the Constitution says the Federal Government has the obligation for interstate commerce. So debating how much of the Missouri River, as Senator HOEVEN brought up, is navigable is a constitutional debate to have because it is a commerce issue.

I say to Senator BARRASSO, suggesting that all the water in the country is navigable doesn't make sense. The Senator has been one of the leaders in trying to point out for months and years now that this rule will be ruinous to economic activity.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I want to agree and second everything that my colleague from Missouri, Senator BLUNT, had to say—that 99.7 percent of his State is underwater according to the EPA.

We had a hearing, and I looked at a map of Wyoming that the EPA presented. It looked like the entire State of Wyoming was underwater, according to the EPA. This is an incredible overreach on the part of this administration, this EPA.

It is so interesting, because the President of the United States said: Well, if you have better ideas, bring them. If you have better ideas, bring them. Well, we did. A number of us cosponsored bipartisan legislation—a number of Democrats supported it, as well—to allow for Congress to establish the principles of what a new EPA rule would look like. It didn't say to get rid of the whole thing. It said there are ways to make it better; let the people on the ground make those decisions.

Who are the best stewards of the land? Here we are. The Presiding Officer, the former Governor of South Dakota, knows that the people of his State have a much better love of the land of South Dakota, just as the former Governor of North Dakota, who is on the floor, knows that the people on the ground in North Dakota have a much greater love of the land and respect for the land and desire to protect the land and the water and to keep the water clean, just as we do in Wyoming and in Missouri. That is what this is about.

It is about letting people who have the best interests and who are the best stewards of the land make those decisions—not, again, a Federal grab. It is absolutely absurd, and it shows a President of the United States who is acting in a way that I believe is lawless to the point that the courts have now weighed in.

The courts have begun to weigh in on the concerns with this rule that we are going to vote on today. We hope we override the veto of the President, because the courts have said: Hey, we need to take a pause. Judge Erickson of the District of North Dakota on August 27 issued an injunction that blocked the waters of the United States rule in 13 States because he said the rulemaking record was ''inexplicable, arbitrary, devoid of a reasoned process''—devoid of a reasoned process. Yet the President is saying: Oh, no, they have got it all right. The President is wrong. The United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals put a nationwide stay on the rule in October. The court stated in granting the stay that ''the sheer breadth of the ripple effects caused by the rule's definitional changes counsels strongly in favor of maintaining the status quo for the time being.''

Yet the President of the United States ignores it all. Congress needs to have a say. The courts are having a say. The President needs to realize that his actions have huge impacts—negative impacts—on the economies of our States, our communities, and certainly of the entire country. So it is a privilege to be here to join my colleagues from South Dakota, North Dakota, Missouri, and soon my colleague from Iowa who will weigh in, supporting the effort to override the President of the United States on this specific piece of legislation.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, we are urging our colleagues to do just exactly that—vote to override and reassert the constitutional authority of the Congress. To finish up our part of our discussion this morning is somebody who also understands the importance of the land, what it means to love and appreciate the land, how you can do that closer to the land than farther away, the Senator from Iowa, Mrs. ERNST.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleagues—the Senators from Missouri, North Dakota, and Wyoming—for their colloquy. This is a big deal, not just for those of us from these States but for all Americans. We have a choice today. We do have a choice. We can stand with our farmers, our ranchers, our small businessmen, our manufacturers, our homebuilders, or we can stand with an overreaching Federal agency that is committed to expanding its reach to over 97 percent of our lands in Iowa and, as my colleague from Missouri stated, 99.7 percent of the land in Missouri.

I know what I am going to do. I am going to stand with my constituents. I am going to stand with Iowans who have told me time and again that their voices were not heard in this process and that their livelihoods are being threatened.

Instead of listening to those who will be most impacted by this rule, the EPA thought it would be better to use taxpayer dollars to illegally solicit comments in an effort to falsely justify their power grab.

A little over a week ago, President Obama, in his State of the Union Address, pledged a willingness to work with Congress on cutting redtape. This bipartisan legislation presented a great opportunity to do just that, but instead he sided with unelected bureaucrats and an unchecked Federal agency. So apparently he must have already forgotten what he had said.

I would also like to remind everyone that in November, 11 of my Democratic colleagues voted to uphold President Obama's rule at the behest of liberal special interests. Then immediately they ran for cover by sending a letter warning the EPA that they may oppose the rule in the future if it is not fixed. Only in Washington could someone reserve the right to do their job at a later time. Here we are 3 months later, and this rule is not fixed. Well, I say to those colleagues: Today is that later time. Join me in helping to fix this rule today.

In closing, we all want clean water. That is not disputable. I have continuously emphasized that the water we drink needs to be clean and safe. However, this rule is not about clean water; it is a regulatory power grab that harms our farmers, ranchers, small businesses, manufacturers, and homebuilders. Stand up for them today, not for a Federal agency gone wrong.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote to scrap this ill-conceived waters of the United States expansion.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, by vetoing Senator ERNST's Congressional Review Act resolution, President Obama is ignoring the pleas of States, local governments, farmers, small businesses, and property owners all over this country. He is ignoring the conclusion of legal counsel for the Corps of Engineers that the rule is ''inconsistent with the Supreme Court's decisions in Rapanos and SWANCC.''

He is ignoring determinations by two Federal courts that EPA's ''waters of the United States'' rule is likely illegal and therefore should not go into effect until the 32 States that have sued to stop this rule have their day in court. Finally, he is ignoring a legal decision issued by the Government Accountability Office that, in developing this rule, EPA broke the law.

According to GAO's December 14 decision, EPA's attempts to defend and promote their rule were not legitimate. In fact, GAO found that EPA's actions constituted illegal covert propaganda and grassroots lobbying. EPA conducted covert propaganda when they drafted a message of support for the WOTUS rule and then convinced 980 people to send that message to their social media network. GAO estimates that this message reached about 1.8 million people who had no idea that they were receiving a message that was written by EPA. In fact, the public was encouraged to send the EPA-written message back to EPA—the ultimate echo chamber. This is covert propaganda taken to a new extreme.

EPA engaged in grassroots lobbying activity when they posted messages on their official government website that directed the public to visit the websites of environmental activist groups who were soliciting opposition to congressional efforts to send this WOTUS rule back to the drawing board. In fact, EPA linked their government website to ''action alerts'' issued by these activist groups.

Because EPA's covert propaganda and lobbying efforts are illegal, they also violated the Anti-Deficiency Act. This act prohibits the unauthorized use of taxpayer dollars.

EPA issued a statement disagreeing with GAO, but their opinion is irrelevant. We live in a world of law. Federal agencies don't get to decide what laws they chose to obey. EPA does not get to decide what constitutes a violation of the ban on propaganda and lobbying. EPA does not get to decide what constitutes a violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act. GAO does, and GAO has issued its legal decision.

If EPA continues with this illegal activity, they will do so knowing and in willful violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act, and a knowing and willful violation is a crime.

By vetoing S.J. Res. 22, President Obama is aligning himself with an illegal rule and is encouraging illegal agency activities and the unauthorized use of taxpayer dollars. This has to stop. No Member of this body should associate himself or herself with these activities.

Please join me in voting to override this veto.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to urge my colleagues to oppose the joint resolution that we will be voting on shortly, to support the Clean Water Act, and to support the clean water rule.

I was listening to my colleagues. First, let me say that the basis of the regulation issued by the Environmental Protection Agency is based upon the Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act was passed by Congress because Congress recognized that it had a responsibility to the American people for clean water. For public health reasons, for economic reasons, for reasons of generations, we needed to make sure we have clean water supplies for drinking, recreation, public health, and our environment. So the authority to issue this clean water rule comes from an act of Congress.

Administrations have been enforcing the Clean Water Act for many years. It was fairly well understood—the waters of the United States—until there were a couple of Supreme Court cases. The Rapanos case was in 2006. It required further clarification; otherwise, decisions were made on a case-by-case basis, giving great uncertainty as to what is covered and what is not covered. That was a decade ago. Congress could have acted during that decade, but Congress chose not to act. We could have clarified the law and therefore given EPA specific instructions, but instead the uncertainty has remained.

I have often listened to my colleagues talk about how one of the most demanding problems we have is that we create uncertainty—a short-term extension of tax provisions, a short-term CR—that we don't give predictability, and that is one of the things we need to do. For farmers and ranchers and developers and the American people to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities of this country, they need to know the ground rules.

That is exactly what this clean water rule does. It sets the parameters of what is going to be regulated and what

is not. It uses the prior application—before the Supreme Court cases—as its guideline. It does not pave new ground. It is basically what the stakeholders and the public thought was the law before the Supreme Court cases, which added to the uncertainty.

If you listen to some of my colleagues, you would think they just pulled this regulation out of thin air. They had over 400 meetings with stakeholders—a 2-year process. Millions of comments were reviewed before the final regulation was issued. So this went through a very deliberative process.

First and foremost, it offers certainty on the application of the law and uses the prior application as the main way of determining what is covered, and it rejects the case-by-case uncertainty that is under existing law.

The rule protects public health, our environment, and our economy. Let me talk a little bit about that. One out of every three Americans would be getting drinking water that would not be covered if we don't get the Clean Water Act in full application—67 percent of Marylanders.

There are millions of acres of wetlands that are at risk of not being regulated. Wetlands are critically important for flood protection in many of our States, to recharge groundwater supplies—important to many of our States—to filter pollution. That is very important. It is important in Maryland. The Chesapeake Bay and the Chesapeake Bay's environmental future very much depend upon the quality of the upstream waters and wetlands. It is at risk if we don't move forward with the full application of the Clean Water Act.

It is certainly important for wildlife habitat. I hear all of my friends talk about how important it is to preserve our wildlife. Well, that is very much engaged in what we are talking about. It also deals with our economy. Some of my colleagues have talked about that. Certainly I can talk about the wildlife recreation benefits in my State of Maryland—a $1.3 billion-a-year industry in Maryland and over $500 million in fishing alone. Well, let me tell you something. If you have polluted waters, you are going to lose your wildlife recreational industry. It is critically important for recreation. I think my colleagues understand that.

My colleagues talk about agriculture. Agriculture, of course, needs clean water. We would be the first to acknowledge that clean water is very important to agriculture. As it relates to the agricultural community, there are so many special exceptions in the clean water rule.

Let's at least be straight as to what is covered and what is not covered. Many of the examples that have been given on the floor of the Senate are not covered bodies of water under the clean water rule that is being proposed.

The bottom line is that this rule is not only good for our environment, it is not only good to make sure people have safe drinking water, it is not only good to make sure that we have clean streams, that wetlands are protected, and that water bodies that flow into navigable waters are protected so we have clean water for the purposes of our environment, but it is also important for our economy because of the direct impact it would have, and it is important to many industries that depend upon clean water supplies. Many of them are very much dependent upon clean water supplies in order to produce the products in agriculture that are critically important.

For the sake of our environment, for the sake of our economy, I urge my colleagues to reject this resolution.

Let me add one last point. We are all proud Members of the Senate. We are all proud Members of this Congress. I would hope one of the legacies we want to leave when this term is over is that we have added to the proud record of those who served before us in protecting our waters and in protecting our air because that has been the legacy of the Congresses before us—the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Chesapeake Bay Program, the Great Lakes. Congress was responsible for many of these programs.

On the Chesapeake Bay, but for the actions of Congress, that program would not be what it is today. The funds would not be there. We initiated it. It was not even in the administration's budget. We did that because we recognized that the Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure, the largest estuary in our hemisphere. We understood that, so we acted.

So what is going to be the legacy of this Congress? Is this going to be a Congress that moves in the backward direction in protecting our clean water? I hope that is not the legacy of this Congress.

I urge my colleagues to be on the right side of clean water, to be on the right side of what Americans expect us to do and to protect the water supply of our Nation and to vote against this joint resolution.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the veto message on S.J. Res. 22, a joint resolution 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 Federal Water Pollution Control Act, shall be brought to a close?

Mitch McConnell, Tom Cotton, John Thune, Johnny Isakson, Steve Daines, Roy Blunt, Cory Gardner, Deb Fischer, Pat Roberts, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, Joni Ernst, David Vitter, Lamar Alexander, John Barrasso, Ron Johnson, Thad Cochran.

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 veto message on S.J. Res. 22, a joint resolution 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 Federal Water Pollution Control Act, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have vote ''yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 5 Leg.]

YEAS—52

Ayotte	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Capito	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cassidy	Heller	Rounds
Coats	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Sessions
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Donnelly	Manchin	Vitter
Enzi	McCain	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—40

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Kaine	Reid
Booker	King	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Markey	Stabenow
Carper	McCaskill	Tester
Casey	Menendez	Udall
Collins	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NOT VOTING—8

Alexander	Cruz	Scott
Boxer	Rubio	Warner
Coons	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 40.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Cloture not having been invoked, under the previous order, the veto message on S.J. Res. 22 is indefinitely postponed.

The Senator from Kansas.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

43RD ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE DECISION

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, thank you to my colleagues who are joining me here today and so many other efforts to stand up for women. The 43rd anniversary of the Supreme Court's historic ruling in Roe v. Wade is tomorrow. This is an important time to remember how much this decision has meant for women's equality, opportunity, and health, why it is so important we continue defending the hard-won gains that women have made, and why we need to keep pushing for continued progress.

For anyone who supports a woman's constitutionally protected right to make her own health care choices, this has been a tough and trying Congress. To be honest, at the beginning of 2015, I gave my Republican colleagues the benefit of the doubt. I hoped that in the majority, they might focus more on governing and less on trying to get in between a woman and her rights. Unfortunately, that didn't last long.

Since this Congress began, more than 80 bills have been introduced in Congress that would undermine a woman's constitutionally protected right to make her own choices about her own body. The House and Senate have voted a total of 20 times on legislation to roll back women's health and rights.

That is not all. Republicans have pushed budget proposals that would dismantle the Affordable Care Act. After a summer of using deceptive, highly edited videos to discredit Planned Parenthood and try to take away health care services that one in five women rely on over their lifetimes, the House has doubled down by launching a special investigative committee to keep up the political attacks. Of course similar efforts to undermine women's constitutionally protected health care rights are underway across the country.

Nowhere is that clearer than in Texas, where an extreme anti-abortion law could force 75 percent of the clinics statewide to close. If that law stands, 900,000 women of child-bearing age will have to drive as far as 300 miles round trip to get the health care they need.

To be clear, a right means nothing without the ability to exercise that right. Laws like HB2 in Texas and many others like it across the country, driven by extreme conservative efforts to undermine women's access to care, are without question getting in between women and their rights, especially the rights of women who can't afford to take off work and drive hundreds of miles just to get health care.

Later this year, the Supreme Court will decide whether to uphold Texas's extreme anti-abortion law. In doing so, they will decide whether women can act on the rights they are afforded in the Constitution. This law puts women's lives at risk. It is the biggest threat to women's constitutional rights in over a decade. That is why I am working with many of my Democratic colleagues to call on the Supreme Court to uphold Roe v. Wade and protect a woman's right to make her own health care decisions.

Today, as we head into a year that is absolutely critical for women, I have a message for those who want to turn back the clock. Those efforts to undermine women's health care are nothing new. Women have been fighting them for generations, and we are going to keep fighting back today. We are not going to go back to the days when because women had less control over their own bodies, they had less equality and less opportunity.

As we defend the progress we have made, we will keep pushing for more, from continuing to expand access so that where a woman lives doesn't determine what health care she can get to expanding access to affordable birth control and family planning, to fighting back against domestic violence and sexual assault, which disproportionately impacts women.

We are going to keep pushing for progress because we believe strongly that the next generation of women—our daughters and our granddaughters—should have stronger rights and more opportunity, not less.

My colleagues and I in the Senate are going to keep working hard every day to bring women's voices to the Senate floor and show that when women are stronger, our country is stronger. Let's keep up the fight.

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, Roe v. Wade became law of the land 43 years ago, taking women out of the back alleys and promising them the fundamental right to make their own choices about their health care and their futures.

As we mark this milestone, the GOP and their extreme allies are doing everything in their power to take away that promise. Since 2010, States have passed 288 new laws that are designed to place barrier upon barrier between women and their critical health care. These laws have piled on outrageous requirements for clinics, providers and the women they serve—making it harder for women to get the care they need.

Texas's extreme law, HB2, is no different. The Supreme Court recently agreed to hear Whole Women's Health v. Cole, a case challenging HB2, which is designed to close health clinics that provide safe, legal abortions. Its proponents claim to be protecting women. In what universe is it ''protecting'' women by making it harder for them to access critical health care?

The answer, of course, is it's not.

This law targets women's health care providers with intentionally burdensome requirements such as mandating that physicians gain admitting privileges at hospitals within a 30-mile radius of where they practice—a provision that has already forced more than half the clinics in Texas to close.

And let's be clear: that is their goal—to shut down clinics and deny rights. If HB2 is upheld, it would reduce the number of providers from 40 to 10. Ten clinics for the second largest State in the country. This would force women to travel for hours or even to another State for care.

That is exactly what happened to Austin resident Marni, who was forced to fly to Seattle when her procedure was cancelled the night before it was scheduled because the clinic was forced to immediately discontinue providing these services after HB2 took effect. Muni said her first reaction was ''to feel like my rights were being taken away from me, to feel very disappointed that elected officials had the ability to make decisions about my and my fiancé's life.''

In some cases, forcing women to delay or cancel procedures could endanger their health and lives.

Vikki is a diabetic who discovered months into her pregnancy that the fetus she was carrying suffered from several major anomalies and had no chance of survival. Because of Vikki's diabetes, her doctor determined that induced labor and Caesarian section were both riskier procedures for Vikki than an abortion. Fortunately, Vikki lived in a State where she was able to have the procedure she needed to protect her life and ensure she could have children in the future.

But GOP-led state legislatures are doing everything they can to pass laws designed to deny care to women like Vikki. There are currently laws across the country to: Ban abortions; Restrict the use of the abortion pill; Ban the use of telemedicine—which allows doctors to treat patients who live far away or in rural areas and prescribe abortion medication; Require women to wait a certain time between their first doctor's visit and their procedure; and Require women go through mandatory counseling and even require an ultrasound in which medical personnel describe the image of the fetus to the patient.

This crusade is also about denying access to family planning. Yes, in the

year 2016, Republicans and their extreme allies are still on a crusade against contraception, which the Supreme Court deemed legal 50 years ago.

This is despite the fact that we know contraceptives are the best way to decrease unintended pregnancies and abortions.

This is despite the fact that 99 percent of American women who have ever been sexually active have used at least one contraceptive method—and not just to plan their families. Fifty-eight percent of women who take birth control do so at least in part to treat painful and difficult medical conditions. Of those, 1.5 million women take it solely as a medication to treat those conditions.

They are women like Sandra from Los Angeles, who suffers from polycystic ovary syndrome and has used birth control since the age of 18 to treat her condition, which could otherwise render her infertile and put her at higher risk for complications like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. For women like Sandra, access to birth control is essential.

In fact, contraception has had such a dramatic impact on women and families in this country that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared it one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century. A 2012 study also found that access to affordable birth control led to a decline in teen births and reduced the rate of abortions by one-half, which is a goal we all should share.

So while many of us fight to expand access to affordable birth control, the GOP is trying to make contraception more expensive and harder to get.

Ironically, so many of those who want to overturn Roe and deny access to contraceptives are the same people who say they want limited government. There is nothing limited about inserting the government between a woman, her family and their most personal health care decisions.

This is the opposite of limited government—and it is wrong and dangerous. Leaving women with no other option for health care may force them to take matters into their own hands—and in Texas, it is already happening. A recent study by the University of Texas found that as many as 210,000 women tried to end their own pregnancies since HB2 took effect in 2013.

We cannot go back to the days of back alley abortions.

We cannot undermine the promise Roe made to women 43 years ago.

In the 21st century, we cannot deny women access to family planning and other reproductive care.

But that is exactly what the GOP and their right-wing allies are trying to do.

These shameful attacks are trying to take away the real, legal health care that millions of women depend on. This is a fight that has been picked before. We have won it before, and we will win it again.

We will fight this assault on women's health.

We will fight to make sure that women across America can continue to get the services they need—and deserve.

And, we will make sure the promise of Roe v. Wade is protected for the next generation of women.●

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I rise to mark the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. Forty-three years ago, within the lifetime of most of us here, the Supreme Court's decision effectively reversed draconian State laws prohibiting abortion and gave women power over their own health care decisions.

Before Roe v. Wade, nearly 5,000 American women died every year seeking abortion care that was legally not available to them. That number dramatically dropped after the decision because women were able to get abortion care from trained medical professionals legally, out in the open. The Court found that a woman's right to access abortion care is a fundamental constitutional right. While as with many constitutional rights, not totally unfettered, this decision enabled women to gain control over their own bodies and in turn their futures.

If the government interfered in other patient-doctor decisions the way that State and local governments have interfered with women's reproductive rights, there would be a national uproar. Why is it different when we talk about a woman's body as opposed to a man's? Can you imagine if States passed laws restricting fundamental decisions about a man's medical care? Why is it that women have to defend deeply personal decisions over our own bodies in court and in legislatures?

I recognize that there are deeply held beliefs by good people on both sides of this issue, which is why the right to choose should be left to the individual woman and her doctor. Yet ever since the Roe v. Wade decision, State and Federal lawmakers have attempted to chip away at a woman's right to make her own health care decisions.

Hundreds of laws have been passed by States to place limitations and roadblocks to a woman's right to choose. Restrictions such as mandatory delays, unduly burdensome regulations, and unscientific 20-week bans are all attempts to undermine Roe v. Wade.

In Congress we continue to see unprecedented attacks on women's reproductive health—destructive policy riders in spending bills, attacks on providers, and efforts to reduce women's access to health care services—all in the name of prohibiting abortions.

These attempts are not based on facts or science. They do not advance any public policy goals in the interest of women, which is why many of us characterize these efforts as part of a deeply anti-women agenda. Moreover, these restrictions disproportionately impact women of color and low-income women. Apparently, it is not enough to remove funding from reproductive services. The anti-women agenda includes reducing funding from maternal health programs and services for infants and children.

The lawmakers writing these restrictions are not the ones who will have to live with their negative consequences. It is the women across the country who will have to live with these consequences.

Of course, the legal battles continue. For example, the U.S. Supreme Court will be hearing arguments later this year on a Texas law that severely restricts the ability of a woman to access safe reproductive health care. My colleague from Washington touched on the problems and challenges that this Texas law imposes. This law, which disproportionately impacts low-income women, has already severely affected the ability of women in Texas to get the reproductive care they need. The rhetoric around this case, as well as the rhetoric employed by abortion foes, has become increasingly dangerous, leading to attacks on providers, clinics, and women seeking care.

I hope we can all agree to not return to the pre-Roe v. Wade landscape, where women endangered their lives seeking reproductive care and thousands died doing so. I urge my colleagues to join me in ensuring that women can continue to control their own destinies for the next 43 years and beyond.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, tomorrow marks the 43rd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Roe v. Wade recognizing a woman's constitutional right to liberty and personal autonomy in her decision of whether to have an abortion or not. This landmark case not only recognizes those rights, but it is also responsible for saving countless women across the country from the devastating and deadly outcomes of back-alley abortions. I want to speak to that because I have some personal knowledge here.

I was a young State's attorney in Vermont before Roe v. Wade, and I will never forget getting a call in the middle of the night from the police and going with them to the emergency room of the local hospital. The young woman who was there had nearly died from an unsafe, illegal abortion because she could not legally receive that care from a doctor. I want to speak of that tragic history today because I feel the current effort in many States to roll back Roe v. Wade by denying women access to doctors could drag women back to those dark and dangerous times.

In the years leading up to the Supreme Court decision of Roe v. Wade, I was the State's attorney in Chittenden County, VT. Abortion was illegal in my State of Vermont. Despite the State ban, many women desperately needed and sought this medical care, and some doctors risked their freedom and livelihood by providing women with abortions at local hospitals. These were safe abortions in medical facilities that saved women's lives and protected their health. Knowing this, I made it clear to the doctors in my county that I would not prosecute any of them for providing this medical attention to women in a medical facility. I did, however, prosecute to the full extent of the law others who preyed upon women's fear and desperation by extorting them for unsafe, back-alley abortions.

There are 100 Senators in this body. I am the only U.S. Senator who has ever prosecuted somebody in an abortion case. I vividly remember that horrific case. It was the spring of 1968, and I was called to the hospital to see this young woman, as I mentioned. She had nearly died from hemorrhaging caused by the botched abortion. I prosecuted the man who had arranged for the unsafe and illegal abortion that nearly killed her.

After that case and after witnessing firsthand the tragic impact that the lack of safe and legal abortion care had on women and families in my State, I talked to the local doctors about challenging Vermont's abortion law. A year later, a group of women and doctors brought a class action case to overturn the law. The case was styled as a suit against me as a State prosecutor, but this was a test case against the law, and I publicly welcomed the case. Even when the office of the State attorney general told me that it lacked resources to devote to any defense in this case, I decided to file briefs of my own, but the case was unable to proceed because none of the plaintiffs were seeking abortions at the time. The particular nature of the constitutional claim to abortion, which by its nature is a time-limited claim, made it extremely difficult to bring actionable cases before the courts. But later that same year, we got another chance.

The case in which I represented the State and did the briefs was Beecham v. Leahy, and it quickly made its way to the Vermont supreme court. At that time, our State's high court was composed entirely of Republicans, but these conservative justices understood what we had been arguing all along—that a statute whose stated purpose was to protect women's health, yet denied women access to doctors for their medical care, was sheer and dangerous hypocrisy. The court's opinion rightly questioned: Where is that concern for the health of a pregnant woman when she is denied the advice and assistance of her doctors? The court's ruling in Beecham v. Leahy, that protecting women's health for required access to safe and legal abortions, ensured that the women of Vermont would no longer be subjected to the horrors of back-alley abortions. It was a victory for women's health in Vermont. Even though the attorney general moved for reargument, I told the court as the State's attorney that I had no objection to the ruling and concurred with it.

A year later the U.S. Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade held what is now the law of the land. Women have a constitutional right to their autonomy and bodily integrity that protects their decision to have an abortion and to make that decision with their doctors.

I recount this history not just to mark another year of women's rights and safety under both Roe v. Wade and Beecham v. Leahy, but also to connect the history to the attack today on women's access to safe and legal abortions that are threatening to take us back to those times. States looking to roll back women's rights have returned to penalizing doctors to deter them from providing women with safe health care. What I find most appalling is that States that are passing these laws claiming they somehow protect women's health. Yet these laws have nothing to do with women's health, and they have everything to do with shutting down women's access to safe and legal abortion. When you deny women access to doctors for medical services, you deny them their constitutional rights. You also deny them their safety and, in some cases, their lives. This is a fact that legislators passing these laws either callously ignore or willfully choose not to hear.

I still remember that case as though it was yesterday. I still remember that young woman, and I still remember the history of the person who was performing those illegal abortions. That is why I joined an amicus brief with 37 other Senators and 124 Members of the House in the Whole Women's Health v. Hellerstedt case currently before the Supreme Court. Our brief urges the Court to overturn a State law that requires doctors who provide abortions to meet onerous restrictions that apply to no other medical procedures and are completely unrelated to protecting women's health.

The Texas law at issue would have the effect of shuttering 75 percent of all women's health clinics that provide abortion services in the State if the full law were implemented, as well as possibly shuttering all the other services they provide. Already, parts of the law in effect have had a devastating impact on women's health. As a University of Texas study of women showed, after the law went into effect, an estimated 100,000 to 240,000 women have tried to end their pregnancies on their own without seeking medical attention. The study found that women, with nowhere to turn, resorted to herbs, illicit drugs, and even self-harm.

That this law was passed under the pretense of women's health is a travesty, and it should be struck down. The Supreme Court Justices cannot ignore the impact upholding this State law will have on hundreds of thousands of women in Texas and across the Nation.

When I see these efforts to prevent women's access to safe and legal medical services, I think about all the young women in Vermont who have grown up knowing only that the U.S. Constitution and the Vermont Constitution protects their liberty and also recognizes that they are capable of deciding for themselves matters that control their lives and their destiny. I hope they and the generations after them never experience otherwise from the Supreme Court.

I will speak further on this subject another time, but when I think about what that young woman in Vermont turned to, I am glad our case to uphold our Constitution's right to privacy, Beecham v. Leahy, is on the books. I applaud the very conservative, very Republican Supreme Court Justices who wrote it in a nearly unanimous opinion.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONGRATULATING ZIPPY DUVALL

Mr. PERDUE. Madam President, we are celebrating a first in Georgia history today. Last week our State's Farm Bureau president, Zippy Duvall, was elected by the American Farm Bureau Federation to serve as its 12th president. I join my fellow Georgians in congratulating Zippy on this honor and look forward to working with him in this new role.

Zippy, as he is affectionately known—and that is his real name—first became a member of the Farm Bureau in 1977. He is a third-generation dairy farmer and currently maintains a beef cow herd and poultry production operation. To the Duvalls, farming is a business, a lifestyle, and a proud family tradition. As a dairyman, Zippy is accustomed to hard work, and he will be a tireless champion for the agricultural industry. He understands the importance of a safe and abundant food supply for consumers across the Nation and globe.

Zippy traveled over 55,000 miles and visited 29 States to meet with Americans and discuss his vision for the future of American agriculture. He heard from farmers and ranchers across our country—just as we have in the Senate—that something has to be done to defend citizens against a runaway government. From taking action against the EPA's power grab of our Nation's water, to promoting a climate of abundant trade and supporting a safety

net—not a guarantee on farm prices—to pursuing policies that enhance the availability and affordability of all energy resources, I am glad to know Zippy Duvall will be leading in these and many other areas.

Agriculture is a strategic industry not only for Georgia but also for our Nation. I join our country's farmers and ranchers in the pursuit of a strong, safe, and abundant industry. Our kids and our grandkids depend on this. I am very confident that with leaders like Zippy, we can actually do this.

Congratulations to Zippy, his wife Bonnie, and the entire Duvall family as they begin this exciting chapter together. This election is a great victory not only for Georgia but also for all of agriculture. I look forward to working with Zippy and the members of the American Farm Bureau Federation to promote a strong, safe, and abundant future for our agricultural industry in the United States.

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.

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

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

BIPARTISAN SPORTSMEN'S ACT

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I rise to thank and congratulate my Environmental and Public Works Committee colleagues on the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act. This legislation will now join the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee's sportsmen's package that was approved last fall. I hope this legislation can now swiftly advance to the Senate floor for consideration and approval.

As a member of the EPW Committee and vice chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, I am grateful for the opportunity to work with my colleagues on legislation to promote our country's hunting, fishing, and conservation heritage. The Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act includes a broad array of bipartisan measures that enhance opportunities for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts by preserving our Nation's rich outdoor heritage.

This bill also expands and enhances hunting and fishing opportunities on Federal lands by establishing a more open policy for recreational activities to gain access on public lands. The bill also provides States with more flexibility to build and maintain public shooting ranges, allowing greater opportunities for more Americans to engage in recreational and competitive shooting activities.

It prevents groups from restricting ammunition choices, which would unnecessarily drive up costs, hurt participation in shooting sports, and consequently decrease important conservation funding. I am especially encouraged by the fact that this bill includes a bipartisan amendment which is identical to the Sensible Environmental Protection Act that I promoted with Senators CARPER and CRAPO. It targets the duplicative permitting of pesticides under FIFRA and the Clean Water Act.

This duplicative process has created unnecessary burdens on resources for pesticide users such as private homeowners, businesses, golf courses, local water, and natural resource authorities, and of course the sportsmen's community.

All across the country sportsmen and outdoor enthusiasts utilize pesticides for critical habitat management by suppressing harmful pests and vector-borne diseases, which threaten outdoor activities of all kinds. Eliminating harmful and invasive pests is crucial to vegetation and ecosystem management.

This legislation clarifies that the NPDES permits should not be required for the application of pesticides that are already approved by the EPA authorized for sale, distribution or use under FIFRA. These products benefit outdoor recreation enthusiasts by protecting and maintaining natural habitats.

Another priority that I championed increases transparency for the Judgment Fund. This provision will help our efforts to track taxpayer-funded litigation that impacts public lands policies. As my colleagues may know, the Judgment Fund is administered by the Treasury Department and is used to pay certain court judgments and settlements against the Federal Government. Essentially, this fund is an unlimited amount of taxpayer dollars which is set aside for Federal Government liability.

The Judgment Fund is not subject to the annual appropriations process, and even more remarkably, the Treasury Department has no reporting requirements so these funds are paid out with very little oversight or scrutiny. This is no small matter, as the Judgment Fund disburses billions of dollars in payments every year. Since the Treasury Department is not bound by reporting requirements, few public details exist about where the funds are going and why.

The Public Lands Council has denounced the lack of oversight of the Judgment Fund, stating that ''certain groups continuously sue the Federal Government and Treasury simply writes a check to foot the bill without providing Members of Congress and American taxpayers basic information about the payment.'' This kind of litigation can have a major impact on sportsmen and others who enjoy multiple uses of Federal lands. A GAO report regarding cases filed against the EPA showed a disturbing pattern where groups and big law firms are suing under the same statutes to push a political agenda through the courts. The legislation I introduced with Senator GARDNER, known as the Judgment Fund Transparency Act, has been included as a provision in ENR's Sportmen's Act. It will bring these cases to light. Simply put, more transparency leads to greater accountability.

Members of Congress have worked hard on the Bipartisan Sportmen's Act for the last 6 years. It is time for the Senate to take action. We have the opportunity to provide the sportsmen's community with the certainty that they need to allow important conservation work to thrive without fear of destructive Federal redtape.

I am proud to be the vice chair of the Sportsmen's Caucus, and I look forward to continuing our work to advance these important legislative measures.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold her suggestion?

Mrs. FISCHER. I will. I see Senator BLUMENTHAL on the floor.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Nebraska, and I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

43RD ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE DECISION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I come to the floor on two issues of great importance to our Nation, both involving the rights and opportunities of individuals to live in the greatest, strongest Nation in the history of the world, with the tremendous opportunity to fulfill their dreams and their rights—rights to enhance themselves and rights of privacy.

Tomorrow we will celebrate the 43rd anniversary of the Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade. As I recall well from my days as a law clerk to Justice Blackmun in the term following Roe v. Wade, that was a bitterly controversial decision, but it was one that we thought at the time would assure every woman of her constitutional right to make her own decision about whether and when to have a child, based on the fundamental right of privacy that decision enshrined and expressed and protected.

Unfortunately, those great hopes have been dashed. Over the last four decades, this constitutional right to reproductive care has been under attack throughout this country. Rather than advancing the health and well-being of women, legislators in a lot of States, and even in the Federal Government, have put themselves squarely between women and their health care providers, denying that fundamental right of choice that Roe v. Wade guaranteed.

That practical reality means that Roe v. Wade has been far less effective

than it could and should have been, because those opponents have advocated and implemented dangerous laws that undermine and violate a woman's right to privacy and diminish her access to constitutionally guaranteed reproductive health care services. These restrictions fall disproportionately on minorities and many who live in rural or medically underserved areas. I have great respect for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but we are jeopardizing the health care necessary for millions and millions of women and their right to privacy in this great country.

I have introduced a measure that would help prevent these violations of rights at the State level. The Women's Health Protection Act would invalidate not only extreme laws such as the Texas law that is now before the U.S. Supreme Court but dozens of other restrictive legislative steps that States have implemented and introduced to block women from accessing safe and legal health care.

I am happy to celebrate this anniversary of Roe v. Wade, but I think it is a moment to rededicate ourselves to the continuing task, more urgent and difficult than ever, to enable every woman to have the right of privacy, the right to make decisions about her own body, about whether and when to have children, and that fundamental right can help make abortion safe, legal, and rare.

DEBT-FREE COLLEGE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I wish to speak now about what should be a right for young people and all people in this country, which is the goal of debt-free college.

Over the last months, I have held roundtables around the State of Connecticut—all around our State—with young people at the college as well as high school level who are in danger of losing the American dream—their dreams, their choices about where they want to go to school, because college for them has become unaffordable. For many who have already been to school, the debt is crushing—in fact, financially crippling. It is approaching $1.3 trillion, which affects not only those students who have graduated and who may be seeking to go to college but also our entire economy. Someone graduating from college with $30,000, $40,000, $50,000 or $100,000 of debt and then from graduate school or law school or business school with that same kind of financial burden can't save for retirement, can't start a family, can't buy a home, can't begin a business that may employ people.

College affordability is essential to creating jobs and advancing and fueling economic growth. It is an engine of economic growth. It enhances the talents and the gifts that young people bring to the economy. It provides the skills that are needed now on the assembly line and in business. I encounter businesses across Connecticut—and I am sure it is true across the country—that tell me: We have jobs, we can't fill them, and we can't find young people with the right skills. That is why our community colleges play such an important role in our educational system.

The agenda that we have announced today as a caucus will meet this need in a number of important ways. It will make 2 years of community college tuition-free. It will enable students to refinance their debt when interest rates are lower, as they can now with a loan for a car or a loan for a home, but not for a Federal loan. It will assure that people are enabled a more affordable education by holding colleges accountable and make them responsible for the levels of debt their students incur, because they should be held accountable when those debts default.

It will take those measures and others that are part of a comprehensive agenda that will advance the affordability of college and make debt less burdensome, but it will also expand the availability of Pell grants and take other measures that will make debt less necessary, because the goal should be debt-free college.

Our ultimate aspiration is debt-free college. We are beginning with community colleges that are tuition free, but the ultimate goal ought to be debt-free college. That will require expanding Pell grants and other scholarship aids and financial assistance programs that now are available but simply unacceptably in too small amounts.

I have two measures that I have offered on my own to be taken as part of this total program although they are not part of the act. One would recognize students for the public service they perform. If they become firefighters or police officers or work at the YMCA or in local government, their community service ought to be recognized by reducing the debt they owe, not just at the end of 10 years as happens now but year by year, pro rata; not just if they stay in the same job but if they move from one job to another or even have to move homes, go across State lines, expanding the availability of public service recognition and credit to reduce college debt. It is much in the spirit of the GI Bill. I hope we will move forward to expand the availability of debt recognition and reduction for public service.

I also hope that when our needier students receive assistance for room and board when they go to college, they will not be taxed on that assistance. That happens now. Why should they be taxed on the room and board they need and that assistance to go to college? That is wrong. And scandalously and outrageously, it is wrong that the U.S. Government makes money off the backs of our students. We should be investing in one of the greatest assets in a democracy—people who want to raise their skills and talents and education so they can better serve not just in the public sector but in the business world, so they can help create jobs themselves and become the entrepreneurs and the job creators. They can't do it if they are burdened with tens of thousands—some hundreds of thousands—in debt. The present levels of debt are a disservice to our Nation. They inhibit freedom, they undercut opportunity, and they destroy dreams.

Some of the most moving moments of my roundtables with young people are to hear them describe how they could not attend their dream school. They called their first choice their dream school and the reason it was their dream school is because they could pursue engineering or nursing or marketing or other kinds of vitally important skills at that place in the best way possible. That was their dream school not because the weather was good or because their friends were there but because the skill levels and the education offered was exactly the right fit for their aspirations. Some cried as they described the unbridgeable gap between what they could afford and what the school charged. With what they could afford—even with financial aid, even with help from their families, and even with debt—they still faced an unbridgeable gap. And those dreams dashed, deferred, destroyed for those students are a national tragedy. For them, it will shape their futures, although I have great confidence that their drive and perseverance will enable them to achieve great things. But for our Nation, it means a deferring and diminishing of our economy and our national quality of life.

We are the strongest, greatest Nation in the history of the world because we provide more opportunity and more freedom than any other country. We are stronger because of our diversity and because we create and we reward the dreamers who have the strength and the ability to set high standards, to aspire to be the best, and to want an education that enables them to achieve those goals.

The current levels of college debt are inconsistent with who we are as a Nation. That is why I am proud today to join my colleagues on this side of the aisle and to say to our friends across the way: Join us. Let's make it bipartisan. If you have a plan, if you have ideas, if you think there are other ways to accomplish things, let's work together, because those students, their families, our Nation, the businesses that are creating jobs and want these young people to fill them so we can drive the economy forward all depend on us working together, reaching across the aisle and making sure that we enable every person, every student who wants to go to college to fulfill that dream without the financially crushing burden of current levels of debt.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, we have a problem—money. Six years ago today, the U.S. Supreme Court made the problem worse, a lot worse. Thanks to the Supreme Court, our system of elections is riddled with corruption. Money floods our political system—money that lets a handful of billionaires shape who gets into Congress and may decide who sits in the White House.

As Congress has become more beholden to billionaires and less worried about the American people, look at what has happened in Washington. Armies of lawyers and lobbyists flood the hallways of Congress and regulatory agencies, urging just a little tilt for every law and every rule—a sentence here, an exception there, and always tilted in favor of the rich and powerful. Corporate executives and government officials spin through the revolving door, making sure the interests of powerful corporations are always carefully protected. Powerful Wall Street businesses pay barely disguised bribes, offering millions of dollars to trusted employees to go to Washington for a few years to make policies that will benefit exactly those same Wall Street businesses. Corporations and trade groups fund study after study that just so happen to support the special rule or the exception that the industry is looking for.

Washington works great for a handful of wealthy individuals and powerful corporations that manipulate the system to benefit themselves. It works great for the lobbyists and the lawyers who slither around Washington day in and day out, handsomely paid to troll for special deals for those who pay them. But for everyone else, Washington is not working so well, and if we don't change that, this rigged political game will break our country.

Change is needed in many areas, but we can start with how we fund elections. In 2012, about 3.7 million Americans gave modest donations—under $200—to President Obama and Mitt Romney. Those donations added up to $313 million. In the same election, 32 people gave monster donations to super PACs. Thirty-two people spent slightly more on the 2012 elections than the 3.7 million people who sent modest dollar donations to their preferred Presidential candidates. When 32 people can outspend 3.7 million citizens, it is pretty obvious that democracy is in real danger.

We are headed into another Presidential election, and I speak out today because I am genuinely alarmed for our democracy. I am genuinely alarmed because 6 years ago today the U.S. Supreme Court said that the privileged few are entitled under the Constitution to spend billions of dollars to swing elections and buy off legislators. Six years ago today the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a century of established law and in doing so unleashed a flood of secret corporate money into our political system.

The Supreme Court created a big problem, but that does not mean that anyone with any integrity must just roll over and play dead. No, it is time to fight back. Sure, the Supreme Court has a lot of power, and, yes, they have used it to do a huge amount of damage. But even under the Supreme Court ruling there is room to fight back against the complete capture of our government by the rich and powerful.

Let's start right here with three examples of what this Congress could do right now today—what this Congress could do if we had the political courage to stand up to the superwealthy few and a handful of corporations.

No. 1, pass Senator DURBIN's Fair Elections Now Act. This legislation would create public funding for congressional elections. Imagine the contributions of small donors so working families would have a louder voice and could begin to compete with the rich and powerful. This is a bipartisan solution—well, at least bipartisan outside Washington. According to a recent poll, Democrats and Republicans both agreed strongly with the idea of citizen-funded elections; 72 percent of Democrats and 62 percent of Republicans said yes.

No. 2, pass the DISCLOSE Act, Senator WHITEHOUSE's bill to force super PACs out of the shadows and make them tell where the money comes from. According to that same poll, 91 percent of Democrats and 91 percent of Republicans agree that super PACs and other special interests should have to disclose the source of their funding.

No. 3, pass the Shareholder Protection Act, Senator MENENDEZ's bill to force companies to tell their shareholders how much money they are giving to politicians and which politicians they are giving it to. This is the shareholders' money, and they have a right to know how it is spent. If they don't like how the money is being spent, they can put somebody else in charge.

Those are three things Congress could do right now, but there is even more.

No. 4, the President could finalize an Executive order requiring government contractors to disclose their political spending. Why should companies that do business with the government be allowed to give money in secret to benefit elected officials? Seventy-eight percent of Democrats and 66 percent of Republicans want to see this done.

No. 5, the SEC has the authority right now to begin to put together rules that would require opinion corporations to disclose the money they spent in elections. Despite Republican efforts to try to block this rule through a rider in the recent government funding bill, legal experts agree that the agency still has all the authority it needs to prepare a disclosure rule.

The public demands action. The SEC has received more than a million comments from the people across this country urging the agency to issue this rule—88 percent of Democrats and 88 percent of Republicans. That is right, 88 percent of both sides support public disclosure of political spending.

Three former SEC Commissioners, one Republican, two Democrats, wrote a public letter to Chair Mary Jo White urging her to adopt this rule. It is time for the agency to stop making excuses and start doing its job.

No. 6, the FEC has the authority right now to require ads run by super PACs include disclosure of the main people or corporations that paid for them. If they want to run the country, then the billionaires shouldn't be allowed to hide in the shadows. Make them step out in the open where the American people can see who is calling the shots.

There is one more step we can take, a full-blown constitutional amendment, such as the one pushed forward by my colleague Senator UDALL to restore authority to Congress and to the States.

I have to say, I am reluctant to take on a constitutional amendment, but we need to defend our great democracy against those who would see it perverted into one more rigged game where the rich and the powerful always win, and that means taking every step possible, including amending the Constitution.

These are six ideas that would help bring an end to a corrupt political system; six ideas that Congress, the administration, the SEC, and the FCC could put together right now.

A seventh idea is a constitutional amendment that we could begin working on today. This Congress doesn't lack for workable ideas for how to root out the influence of money in politics. This Congress just lacks a spine to do it.

Six years ago the U.S. Supreme Court turned loose a flood of hidden money that is about to drown our democracy. We can blame the Supreme Court—heck, we should blame the Supreme Court, but that is no excuse for doing nothing.

A new Presidential election is upon us. The first votes will be cast in Iowa in just 11 days. Anyone who shrugs and claims that change is just too hard has crawled into bed with the billionaires who want to run this country like some private club. All of us were sent here to do our best to make government work—to make it work not just for those at the top but to make government work for all people, and it is time we start acting like it.

Madam President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION MODERNIZATION AND HEALTH INSURANCE CO-OPS

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, earlier today I attended two hearings. One was held by the Senate Finance Committee on Consumer Operated and Oriented Plans, or CO-OPs, created by the Affordable Care Act. The other was held by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, where Secretary McDonald, a son of Ohio, detailed his plan to modernize the Veterans' Administration.

Both of these hearings are a strong reminder of the importance of government in supporting public health and access to health care and services. We know the Veterans' Administration, with all its problems today, has provided extraordinary health care for millions of veterans all across our country for decades. It doesn't mean we sit back and don't make very important improvements that are necessary at the VA.

When we learned that shocking wait times at the VA were delaying veterans from getting the care they have earned, we took action and passed a new law to invest in better care and provide more health care choices to veterans, but we can't simply act in times of crisis and then turn our backs on those who served in our Nation's military. It is our responsibility to make sure VA facilities in Ohio, Connecticut, the Presiding Officer's State of Iowa, and all over—it is important that these facilities across the country have what they need to provide state-of-the-art medical care for our veterans.

I have been struck by my time on the Veterans' Affairs Committee—I am the only Ohio Senator to ever sit on that committee for a full term. I am struck by how there are a whole lot of Members of Congress who are always happy to appropriate billions of dollars to send our men and women to war, but then when it comes time to take care of them when they come home, these same Members of Congress are not nearly as generous as let's say they were in sending them off to combat. That needs to change.

The same is true for health insurance CO-OPs or CO-OPs that face challenges. Twelve of these programs have failed. We can't sit back and let the remaining 11 CO-OPs meet the same fate. That is why I will continue to work with my colleagues to make sure CMS understands the importance and that they have the support and solvency they need to succeed.

When it comes to providing quality health care, the Ohio CO-OP is a success story worth telling. InHealth Mutual in Ohio covers approximately 25,000 people, 25,000 lives. It has enrolled individuals in each of Ohio's 88 counties. InHealth is doing some wonderful work, and it has taken it upon itself to be a major player in the community and in enhancing public health in Ohio.

One issue InHealth has chosen to highlight is health equity. InHealth is working to eliminate health disparities and is focusing on reducing barriers to care through its InHealth Cares Program.

To that end, InHealth started a faith-based initiative called Project REACH to address health disparities. Three years ago at a Martin Luther King celebration, a Martin Luther King breakfast in Cleveland, a minister told us something we perhaps already knew, but he said it so poignantly. He said: Your life expectancy is connected to your ZIP Code. Think about that. If you are born in Appalachia in Southeast Ohio or if you are born in East Cleveland versus if you are born in the more affluent suburbs of Shaker Heights or Bexley or Upper Arlington, your life expectancy can literally be a difference of 20 years. Imagine there are places in Cuyahoga County—one only 8 or 9 miles apart from the other—where a baby born has a life expectancy of literally 24 years less than a baby born in the more affluent suburb.

But one of the things these CO-OPs can do is—by involving trusted members of the faith community and focusing on issues such as infant mortality, asthma, and diabetes, InHealth is successfully utilizing key community players to strategically improve access to care in minority communities across Ohio, but despite InHealth's current success, they continue to experience significant challenges.

Earlier today, the Acting Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services testified in front of our committee about the challenges facing CO-OPs. At the hearing, many of my colleagues expressed significant concerns about the closure of the 12 CO-OPs that have pulled out of the market as well as the viability of the others that remain. I share those concerns, and I urge the Acting Administrator of CMS, Andy Slavitt, to work with Congress and the remaining CO-OPs, such as InHealth, to ensure their future viability. I commend him on his performance at this morning's hearing. I hope the committee will take the appropriate steps to confirm him so he is no longer an Acting Administrator but has the real job.

Congress and CMS must work together to find creative ways to ensure these CO-OPs that are negatively affected by the lower than expected risk corridor payments can find alternative ways to ensure financial stability.

We should work together to improve the current risk adjustment calculation, which is currently designed to favor the larger, more established health insurance carriers over new and significantly smaller health insurance plans, such as the CO-OPS, and improve provider cost transparency in the market. They must work together to support the alternative ways for CO-OP small businesses like InHealth to raise capital.

CO-OPs like InHealth in Ohio are putting customer service before profits in making a positive difference in patients' health and their pocketbooks. CO-OPs boost competition, they drive down prices for customers, and because they are locally run and operated by their own members, CO-OPs are invested in providing the best possible care for the communities they serve. CO-OPs like InHealth are working. We need to make sure they have the support they need to continue providing quality, affordable local insurance to thousands of people in my State of Ohio and across the country.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Finance Committee, on the floor, and with CMS on these important issues so the existing CO-OPs—like InHealth—can continue to pursue innovative approaches to affordable comprehensive health insurance.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, let me thank my friend from Ohio for his very constructive remarks on the success of CO-OPs. We have a CO-OP in Connecticut that has been providing very good quality care at very reasonable rates. It is part of what helps make our marketplace function, and I will look forward to working with him as we try to sustain the success of CO-OPs across the country moving forward as an element of the Affordable Care Act which, as I have said many times on this floor, is working.

AUTHORIZATION FOR MILITARY FORCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, today I have come to the floor to speak very briefly about a resolution that the majority leader introduced, I believe, yesterday. This is an authorization for military force that apparently purports to give the President legal authority to conduct military operations against ISIS. Before we break for the weekend, I thought it was important to come to the floor to explain very briefly to my colleagues what this resolution really is.

This resolution is a total rewrite of the war powers clause of the U.S. Constitution. Let's be clear about that. It is essentially a declaration of international martial law, a sweeping transfer of military power to the President that will allow him or her to send U.S. troops almost anywhere in the world for almost any reason with absolutely no limitations.

Article I, section 8, clause 11 of the Constitution vests in Congress the responsibility to declare war. Many of us on both sides of the aisle have been arguing for over a year that the President—right now—has exceeded his constitutional authority in continuing

military operations against ISIS without specific authorization from Congress. I have been amongst those who have been calling on this body to debate authorization of military force. So in that sense I am pleased the introduction of this resolution may allow us to have a debate on the Senate floor about the right way to authorize war against our sworn enemy, ISIS, a terrorist organization that deserves to be degraded, defeated, and wiped off the map of this Earth.

While the ink is still wet on this resolution—so I will not endeavor to go into any detailed analysis of it—it is safe to say that this resolution is the wrong way to authorize war against ISIS. The language of this resolution is dangerous and it is unprecedented.

The American people want Congress to authorize war against ISIS, but they also want us to make sure we don't send hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers back into the Middle East to fight a war that has to be won first and foremost with regional partners, and they certainly don't want Congress to hand over the power to the President to send our troops into any country, anywhere in the world, for almost any reason.

That is what this resolution would do. It doesn't give the power to the President to deploy U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria. It gives the power to the President—without consulting Congress—to deploy U.S. forces in any one of the 60-plus countries where ISIS has a single sympathizer. Even worse, the language doesn't even require ISIS to be present in a country for the President to invade. All that is necessary for the President to be able to argue—with a straight face—is that the threat of ISIS was present.

As we have seen in the United States, the threat of ISIS is present in virtually every corner in the world. Thus, this resolution would give the President total absolute carte blanche to send our young soldiers to any corner of the world without consulting Congress.

Now, we wouldn't have to worry about a President abusing this authority granted to him if an example of this abuse wasn't in our immediate rearview mirror. This Congress gave President Bush sweeping authority in two resolutions to fight terrorism in the wake of September 11, and he manipulated and abused that authority to send millions of American troops into Iraq to fight a war under concocted, false pretenses. He got an open-ended authorization from Congress, and he ran with it. Now, what did we get for this colossal misrepresentation? Over 4,000 Americans dead, scores more than that crippled, and a region in chaos, in large part because of our disastrous invasion and occupation.

On the campaign trail today, several of the candidates for President talked with such irresponsible bravado about throwing around America's military might. The likely Republican nominee, as we sit here today, shows a blissful ignorance about U.S. military law and basic foreign policy that is truly frightening.

So given recent history and given the current rhetoric on the Presidential campaign trail today, why would we give the President such open-ended, sweeping authority ever again? And why would we even contemplate a resolution like this one that makes the 9/11 and Iraq war resolutions seem like exercises in thoughtful restraint? Why would we make the mistake of the Iraq war resolution again, especially when there is an alternative?

I know that we will likely have time to debate the question of how to properly authorize war against ISIS later. But in December of 2014, the Foreign Relations Committee did vote out an AUMF that gave the President all the power he needed to fight ISIS, while making sure that he had to come back to Congress if he wanted to dramatically expand the current conflict to other countries or to put hundreds of thousands of American troops into a new war in the Middle East. It is the only AUMF that has received a favorable vote by the Senate, and it is a template for how we can authorize a war that isn't totally and completely open-ended.

Several have argued for us to take up a debate on the AUMF because we believe that over the last 15 years, over the course of the War on Terror, Congress has basically abdicated its responsibility to be the voice of the people on the conduct of foreign policy. Many of us think that a smart AUMF would get Congress back in the game when it comes to our constitutional responsibility to decide when and where our brave troops are sent into battle. But this resolution, as currently written, would do exactly the opposite. It would permanently hand over war-making power to the President, and Congress would never get it back. It would allow this President and the next President to send our troops almost anywhere in the world for virtually any justifiable reason, with no ability for the people's branch of the Federal Government—this Congress—to step in and to have our say.

I do look forward to this debate if it does come to the floor. I think it is an immensely important debate. Frankly, I will be glad to have it. The American public wants us to declare war on ISIS, but they want us to do it in a way that doesn't repeat the deadly, costly mistakes of the past.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). The majority whip.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SAFE COMMUNITIES ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the 800-pound gorilla in the room that people don't want to talk about, and that is our broken mental health treatment system in this country.

Years ago, we made the mistake of institutionalizing people with mental illness, and then we made the mistake of deinstitutionalizing people with mental illness, with nowhere to go and no access to treatment. But I have introduced legislation that I hope will help begin this conversation anew, one that we will have a hearing on next week in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The legislation is called, simply, the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act. It has two overarching goals. First, it will help those suffering from mental illness and their families to find a way forward and to get the support that they need. Second, it will equip law enforcement, teachers, judges, and people with the knowledge and skill sets to spot the early signs of mental illness and give them the means by which to respond effectively.

Sadly, we know that mental illness is a common thread through many senseless acts of violence that we have witnessed across the country. But this problem is more than about just that. I know some of our colleagues say they don't want to talk about how to improve access to mental health treatment if it is going to involve any discussion of guns, but I don't think we can talk about this topic without talking about these incidents of mass violence. But I want to make sure I am very clear and to say it is much more than just that.

It is time for Congress to respond with proven solutions that actually work. The President, as is his habit, has offered controversial proposals that actually violate the Constitution and threaten our rights without solving the problem. To me that is one of the reasons why people get so frustrated with Washington, when people stand up and say that here is something we ought to do, when it really is symbolic in nature and it doesn't actually solve the problem they claim to be addressing. And that is true of the President's Executive actions on guns.

Indeed, the AP's headline, when the President made this announcement, read: ''Obama measures wouldn't have kept guns from mass shooters.'' In other words, the Associated Press makes the point that none of this would have solved the actual problem. But the legislation I have introduced has a good chance to begin the effort to do that.

So since the President won't act responsibly and work with Congress, Congress must act by itself—first, to build consensus and offer solutions, and not just engage in symbolic gestures and more political talking points. It is time we focus our efforts on, first and foremost, providing support to the mentally ill and their families to make sure, first of all, that they are less likely to be a danger to themselves, and, secondly, that they won't be a danger to the communities in which they live.

Next Tuesday, we will have that hearing I mentioned at the outset in

the Senate Judiciary Committee, and we will look at some of the successful models that have proven to be successful in places such as Bexar County, San Antonio, TX.

Like many of our colleagues, I have had the occasion to visit the sheriffs, police chiefs, and the jails in our major metropolitan areas. Virtually all of them have told me that our jails have become warehouses for people with mental illness. When they get out, unless their underlying symptoms are treated and unless they are on an enforceable treatment plan, compliant with their medication, and following the doctor's orders, they are going to end up right back where they were. In the absence of effective treatment of their mental illness, we know many people with mental illness will self-medicate with drugs or alcohol, compounding their problems and becoming what a young man in Houston called a ''frequent flyer,'' when referring to himself. In other words, he would keep coming back again and again and again and again.

But there are some successful models we can look at, and the results are really impressive. Through the reform measures instituted in places such as Bexar County, overcrowded jails have been reduced in size, taxpayer dollars have been saved, and many lives have been changed for the better. The secret is these jurisdictions have realized that we have to focus on treating the mentally ill, not just warehousing them in our prisons and jails. Criminologists and mental health experts will tell you that locking up a mentally ill person without treatment will make them even more dangerous to themselves and increase the risk to the community.

Experts will also agree that if we identify those with mental illness and divert them to treatment, many of them can be restored to mental health, saving lives, increasing public safety, and reducing costs to taxpayers.

There is a great book called ''Crazy,'' written by a gentleman by the name of Pete Earley. Pete is a journalist. Unfortunately, he and his wife had a son that exhibited mental illness symptoms. It was as a result of their dealing with his illness and trying to help him get back onto a productive path in life that they encountered the broken mental health system that I have described a little bit about. The good news is Pete's son is doing well. But it is because he is taking his medications, and he recognizes that when he goes off of his medications he gets into trouble. Pete will be testifying at our hearing next week, and I think he will bring home in a very real way how mental illness affects so many lives around the country, and what we can do to actually equip those families with additional tools to help them help their loved ones.

The truth is, this all takes cooperation. Indeed, in the criminal justice context, it takes collaboration between Federal, State, and local law enforcement. It also takes judges, doctors, and families. But the good news is there are some models for success. We need to make this a priority because so many of the people we encounter today on our streets—the homeless—are people who are suffering from mental illness of some form or another that could be helped. So many people who are jailed for minor criminal offenses are people with mental illness that could be helped. I think it behooves all of us to do what we can to learn from what actually has proven to work in some of our cities around the country, and to try to implement this on a national level.

In addition to Mr. Earley, we are going to be hearing from Sheriff Susan Pamerleau, who has been a champion of mental health reform in the San Antonio area.

But even as the committee begins to consider long overdue mental health legislation, I have to confess that I have been disappointed at some of the responses by some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, because they say: We don't want to talk about the whole problem; we just want to talk about the part of the problem that we want to talk about. So if this involves anything related to Second Amendment rights or guns, then they don't want to have that conversation. But you can't circumscribe the debate or the discussion by carving that out. That has to be a part of it. It will be a part of it, whether we like it or not.

Some of these colleagues on the other side of the aisle have cited a provision of my bill that would actually strengthen and clarify the definitions regarding the uploading of mental health records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. Why would anybody disagree with making sure that adjudication of mental illness be uploaded to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System? That is what happened with the Virginia Tech shooter, for example. He had been adjudicated mentally ill by Virginia authorities, but because the State didn't provide that information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System operated by the FBI, he was able to buy a firearm without being disqualified, which he should have been, based on that adjudication.

My bill also reauthorizes and strengthens the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. This is something our colleagues across the aisle—and, indeed, all of us—have said we support—a background check system. It would work to clarify the scope of the mental health records that are required to be uploaded so that there is no longer mass confusion among State and local law enforcement as to what is required by Federal law. And, because we can't mandate that States do this, we need to provide incentives for them to encourage them to share these records, because these are a national resource. To me, this just makes common sense. Why wouldn't we want States to comply with current laws to keep the mental health background check records updated? I don't understand the controversy about that.

I would like to make clear that if there are Members on the other side of the aisle willing to work with me on this legislation and willing to work with the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, Senator ALEXANDER, and the ranking member, Senator MURRAY, and with TIM MURPHY in the House—who has an important piece of legislation that is much more comprehensive in nature but certainly deals with this issue as well—and along with Dr. BILL CASSIDY here in the Senate, there are many of us on a bicameral basis and on a bipartisan basis who have said we want to do something about this crisis in our country, and that is the mental health crisis.

What we ought to do is roll up our sleeves, sit down at the table, and begin to work through this. I know at least five Democrats are cosponsoring legislation identical to mine in the House of Representatives, so it is up to us to start working to find consensus in the Senate.

This is one of those issues where Republicans have said they would like to see something get done, where the Democrats say they would like to get something done, and presumably the White House would too. How do you explain our not doing what we can do? Even if we can't do everything some of us would like to do, why don't we do what we can do?

I hope we can work together to deal with these reforms and to help make our communities safer. It is up to us to put our heads down and work diligently for the American people and come up with solutions for struggling families—families struggling with a loved one with mental illness and who don't know where to turn. I look forward to hearing more about some of the proposed solutions next week during this hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee and working with all of our colleagues to try to come up with the best answers we can.

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF SUPREME COURT'S CITIZENS UNITED DECISION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today marks the 6-year anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission. In this far-reaching opinion, on a divided 5–4 vote, the Court struck down years of precedent and held that the First Amendment permitted corporations to spend freely from their treasuries to influence elections.

As a result of Citizens United and the series of decisions that followed in its wake, special interests and wealthy, well-connected campaign donors have so far poured more than $2 billion into

recent Federal elections, including 2016 races. About half of the total outside spending since Citizens United went toward the 2012 Presidential election. More than 93 percent of all Super PAC donations in 2012 came in contributions of at least $10,000 from only 3,318 donors, who make up 0.0011 percent of the U.S. population. Of that group, an elite class of 159 people each contributed at least $1 million—which was nearly 60 percent of all Super PAC donations that year.

In the lead-up to the 2016 Presidential primaries, we are once again witnessing an immense amount of spending. A New York Times investigation in October found that of approximately 120 million households in the United States, a mere 158 families, along with businesses they own or control, had already contributed $176 million—nearly half of all funds raised to support the 2016 Presidential campaigns before a single primary vote has been cast.

Congressional races have been similarly flooded with outside spending. For example, in the 2014 midterm elections, outside groups spent more than $560 million to influence congressional races—eight times the approximately $70 million spent in 2006, the last midterm election cycle before Citizens United. And more than 30 percent of that spending came from tax-exempt, ''dark money'' groups that conceal their donors from the public.

The impact of this incredible spending stretches from races for the White House and Congress to Governors' mansions, State capitols, and city halls throughout the country. As in Federal campaigns, Citizens United has led to an explosion of outside spending at the State and local levels, with corporations and wealthy single spenders looking to play kingmaker, pouring cash into races for positions ranging from district attorney to school board members. One of the most startling examples occurred in 2014 in Richmond, CA, a city with a population of 107,000. Chevron—an energy company with more than $200 billion in annual revenue—spent approximately $3 million through campaign committees aimed at influencing the mayoral and city council races. That means Chevron spent at least $33 per voting-age resident in Richmond.

The long-term damage to our political process from Citizens United is just beginning to reveal itself. Some scandals have already surfaced, and there will undoubtedly be more stories of corruption and corrosive influence ahead, further eroding public confidence in our government. I have worked with my colleagues on a number of solutions to stem this tidal wave of secret unlimited spending, including improving disclosure and creating a more transparent campaign finance system. I will continue my efforts to establish a public financing system for congressional elections through the Fair Elections Now Act, which I reintroduced last year.

We also must continue to push for a constitutional amendment that would protect and restore the First Amendment by overturning Citizens United and empowering Congress and State legislatures to set reasonable, content neutral limitations on campaign spending. In 2614, Justice John Paul Stevens discussed his support for an amendment to overturn Citizens United in testimony before the Senate Rules Committee. Here is what he said: ''Unlimited campaign expenditures impair the process of democratic self-government. They create a risk that successful candidates will pay more attention to the interests of non-voters who provided them with money than to the interests of the voters who elected them. That risk is unacceptable.''

As we approach the sixth anniversary of the Citizens United decision, we should heed Justice Stevens's words. It is unacceptable for politicians to feel more beholden to wealthy donors than their constituents. We must work to fix America's campaign finance system and overturn Citizens United so that elected officials listen to the everyday Americans who voted them into office—not just those who bankrolled their success.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I regret missing the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the veto message on S.J. Res. 22, a bill that would block implementation of the Waters of the United States rule and prevent the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers from reissuing a regulation that is substantially similar in the future. I voted against S.J. Res. 22 last fall and, had I been present, I would have voted to uphold the President's veto. While this rule is not perfect, it provides important environmental protection efforts.●

TRIBUTE TO MARGOT ALLEN

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate my longtime staffer Margot Allen on her retirement. Margot has been an essential part of my team since I became a U.S. Senator in 2011, and I am thankful for all of her hard work on behalf of the people of Nevada.

For the past 5 years, Margot has gone above and beyond not only working hard to help achieve my goals for Nevada's military community, but also to bring southern Nevada's active military members, veterans, and their families an unwavering ally in fighting bureaucratic red tape and various issues that often occur when working with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

From helping Nevadans receive the benefits they deserve, to personally meeting many serving at both Nellis Air Force Base and Creech Air Force Base, to welcoming a variety of veterans living throughout the southern Nevada community, Margot has been there to support those that have given so much for our freedoms. I extend my deepest gratitude to Margot for working with Nevada's military community and representing my office with such a genuine concern for Nevada's brave men and women. Not only has she gained my respect, but the respect of the military community across southern Nevada through her tireless resolve to bring these men and women the support they deserve.

Margot also served as my statewide coordinator for Nevada's U.S. service academies. It was through her efforts in working with Nevada's youth who were interested in attending these important institutions that many achieved this goal and were accepted into the academies.

Along with helping Nevada's veterans and active military members, Margot also served as a point of contact to seniors across southern Nevada struggling with Social Security, Medicare, and other programs available to help our aging population. Throughout the last 5 years, Margot worked diligently to help seniors in need receive the help necessary to remain healthy and happy. This community is fortunate that Margot led the way to help southern Nevada's seniors.

Margot also contributed greatly to my team by utilizing a completely different skill set—a love of grammar and writing. Prior to working on behalf of the people of Nevada in my office, she served as a professor at the University of Alabama, as well as taught English-language skills in Panama while her husband, Leonard, worked abroad for the Department of Defense. To say I was privileged to have her in my office would be an understatement.

Above all else, I want to thank Margot for all of her hard work and devotion to the people of our great State. She wore many hats, working with veterans, seniors, and a variety of other Nevadans struggling to work with Federal agencies—we are very fortunate to have had someone willing to put forth such effort and compassion to help those in need. Her legacy of resilience and determination will never be forgotten.

Today I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in congratulating Margot on her retirement and in thanking her for all she has done for the people of our State.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MORGAN WALLACE

● Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Morgan Wallace for her hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Morgan is a native of Teton Village, WY, and she currently attends the Madeira School. Morgan is involved with soccer, lacrosse, and basketball at school. She has also volunteered with the Special Olympics and the World Wildlife Fund. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several weeks.

I want to thank Morgan Wallace for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her next journey.●

REMEMBERING GLEN EDWARD MARTIN

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today we honor the life and service of Glen Edward Martin, whose passing signifies a great loss to Nevada. I send my condolences and prayers to his wife and all of Mr. Martin's family in this difficult time. Mr. Martin was a man truly committed to his family, country, State, and community. He will be sorely missed.

Mr. Martin was born in May 1918 in Council Bluffs, IA, where he remained until after graduation from Abraham Lincoln High School in 1937. He later received his bachelor's degree in economics from Colorado College in 1941 and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California in 1984. Throughout his lifetime, Mr. Martin had four careers, all working in support of his country and local community.

Mr. Martin first served as a U.S. Marine Corps officer from 1938 to 1968. During this time, he served in World War II, the Korean war, and the Vietnam war, receiving numerous Silver and Bronze Stars for his efforts. He was also decorated with a Navy Cross in 1944 at the Battle of Eniwetok. His bravery and service to our country are invaluable. After retiring from the military, Mr. Martin turned his attention to serving the people of Nevada by working as a Nevada State employee. In 1968, Mr. Martin accepted his first role working for the State in comprehensive health planning and later focused on the extension service in civil defense. I am grateful that Mr. Martin dedicated more than a decade of service toward bettering the State of Nevada.

In his final career, beginning in 1983, Mr. Martin served Nevada's seniors, working as an advocate, teacher, and trainer for exercise and resistance training. In 2002, he received the Governor's Point of Lights Award for his unwavering dedication to seniors in Nevada who he helped keep strong and healthy. He also led a 40-participant resistance exercise class 3 days a week at the Carson City Senior Center to help those in need. Mr. Martin was a true role model, demonstrating genuine care for those around him.

No words can adequately thank Mr. Martin, who served not for recognition but because it was the right thing to do for both his country and community. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I recognize Congress has a responsibility not only to honor the brave individuals protecting our freedoms, but to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. Mr. Martin's service to his country and dedication to his family and community earned him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our Nation.

I am honored to commend all of Mr. Martin's hard work. His patriotism and drive will never be forgotten. Today I join the Carson City community and citizens of the Silver State to celebrate the life of an upstanding Nevadan, Mr. Glen Edward Martin.●

BICENTENNIAL OF WELD, MAINE

● Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Weld, ME, a small town set along Webb Lake in Franklin County. The town, with 419 inhabitants, has a long and proud history dating back to the 19th century, and I am pleased to join the people of Weld in celebrating their bicentennial and recognizing the town's cherished place in the State of Maine. The yearlong bicentennial celebration will kick off with an event on Saturday, February 6, at the newly renovated townhall.

First settled in 1800, Weld was incorporated in 1816 and named for its proprietor Benjamin Weld, of the well-known Boston family. Incidentally, the year of Weld's incorporation also marked the notorious Year Without A Summer in New England, with 6 inches of snow blanketing the land in June. Widespread crop failures and other hardships pushed many westward, but the town of Weld prevailed, establishing itself as the small but strong community it remains today.

Nestled in a valley created by Mount Blue and the Tumbledown Mountains, Weld has long been noted for its striking natural beauty. The area is rich with wildlife and home to many fish species, loons, moose, and even the occasional bald eagle. At the core of Weld's identity is Webb Lake, where many go to enjoy Maine's beloved outdoor traditions.

The historic Kawanhee Inn, a rustic log inn that dates back to the 1920's, has gained wide recognition for staying true to its origins and character. Along with Mount Blue State Park, Camp Kawanhee for Boys, and family cottages with deep historical roots, the inn attracts many visitors to Weld. In the summer months, the town's population swells to the thousands as people from Maine and all around the country flock to Weld to enjoy fishing, boating, hiking, and a respite from fast-paced lifestyles.

When the temperatures drop and campers and summer residents pack up to leave, there remains a close-knit and engaged year-round population. The Congregational Church, Masonic Lodge, and the Weld Historical Society are bolstered by active community involvement. Additionally, the Webb Lake Association is a nonprofit organization that spearheads conservation efforts and raises awareness about water pollutants in the lake. The Webb Lake Association is but one example of the townspeople's commitment to preserving the area's unsurpassed beauty.

I commend all that the people of Weld have done to make their town such a special place to live and experience nature. Their shared love for their hometown has made them one of Maine's most cohesive and dedicated communities. This has been especially illustrated by the members of the Weld Bicentennial Committee, whose efforts have made this special celebration possible, and I am proud to recognize this milestone.●

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following joint resolution was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

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.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2464. A bill to implement equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States for the right to life of each born and preborn human person.

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–4173. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''VNT1 Protein in Potato; Amendment to a Temporary Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9939–49–OCSPP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4174. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Propyzamide; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9940–90–OCSPP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016;

to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4175. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Methacrylate type copolymer, compound with aminomethyl propanol; Tolerance Exemption'' (FRL No. 9940–29–OCSPP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4176. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Aspergillus flavus AF36; Time Limited Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9939–53–OCSPP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4177. A communication from the Assistant to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Extensions of Credit by Federal Reserve Banks'' (RIN7100–AE08) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4178. A communication from the Secretary, Division of Corporate Finance, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Simplification of Disclosure Requirements for Emerging Growth Companies and Forward Incorporation by Reference on Form S–1 for Smaller Reporting Companies'' (RIN3235–AL88) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4179. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Community Reinvestment Act Regulations'' (RIN3064–AD90) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4180. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the issuance of an Executive Order revoking Executive Orders 13574, 13590, 13622, and 13645 with respect to Iran and amending Executive Order 13628 with respect to Iran, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4181. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program for Certain Industrial Equipment: Energy Conservation Standards for Small, Large, and Very Large Air-Cooled Commercial Package Air Conditioning and Heating Equipment and Commercial Warm Air Furnaces'' ((RIN1904–AC95 and RIN1904–AD11) (Docket Nos. EERE–2013–BT–STD–0007 and EERE–2013–BT–STD–0021)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–4182. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program for Consumer Products: Test Procedures for Residential Furnaces and Boilers'' ((RIN1904–AC79) (Docket No. EERE–2012–BT–TP–0024)) 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–4183. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Ceiling Fan Light Kits'' ((RIN1904–AC87) (Docket No. EERE–2012–BT–STD–0045)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–4184. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Residential Boilers'' ((RIN1904–AC88) (Docket No. EERE–2012–BT–STD–0047)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–4185. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Partial Approval and Disapproval of Nevada Air Plan Revisions, Clark County'' (FRL No. 9941–13–Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4186. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Designation of Areas for Air Quality Planning Purposes; California; San Joaquin Valley; Reclassification as Serious Nonattainment for the 2006 PM2.5 NAAQS'' (FRL No. 9940–83–Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4187. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of Kansas; Annual Emissions Fee and Annual Emissions Inventory'' (FRL No. 9940–97–Region 7) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4188. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Arkansas; Crittenden County Base Year Emission Inventory'' (FRL No. 9941–21–Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4189. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Texas; Infrastructure and Interstate Transport for the 2008 Lead National Ambient Air Quality Standards'' (FRL No. 9941–29–Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4190. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Allegheny County's Adoption of Control Techniques Guidelines for Four Industry Categories for Control of Volatile Organic Compound Emissions'' (FRL No. 9941–36–Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4191. A communication from the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Valuation of Benefits and Assets; Expected Retirement Age'' (29 CFR Part 4044) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4192. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Food and Drug Administration's annual report on the performance evaluation of FDA-approved mammography quality standards accreditation bodies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4193. A communication from the Executive Director of the Administrative Conference of the United States, transmitting, a report of three recommendations adopted by the Administrative Conference of the United States at its 64th Plenary Session; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4194. A communication from the Acting Chief of the Office of Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Machineguns, Destructive Devices and Certain Other Firearms; Background Checks for Responsible Persons of a Trust or Legal Entity with Respect to Making or Transferring a Firearm'' (RIN1140–AA43) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2016; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4195. A communication from the Acting 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; Exchange of Flatfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XE272) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4196. A communication from the Acting 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; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Bering Sea Subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XE225) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4197. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled

''Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Commercial Quota Available for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts'' (RIN0648–XE241) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4198. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Commercial Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks in the Gulf of Mexico Region'' (RIN0648–XE334) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4199. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; 2015–2016 Biennial Specifications and Management Measures; Inseason Adjustments'' (RIN0648–BF44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4200. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; 2015–2016 Accountability Measure and Closure for King Mackerel in Western Zone of the Gulf of Mexico'' (RIN0648–XE290) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4201. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace, Neah Bay, WA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3321)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4202. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Low Power Television Digital Rules'' ((MB Docket No. 03–185, GN Docket No. 12–268, and ET Docket No. 14–175) (FCC 15–175)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4203. A communication from the Broadband Division Chief, Wireless Telecommunication Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Expanding the Economic and Innovation Opportunities of Spectrum Through Incentive Auctions'' ((GN Docket No. 12–268) (FCC 15–140)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4204. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2016–0029); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4205. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2016–0028); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4206. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2016–0052); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. MCCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with George L. Roberts and ending with Stephen A. Ritchie, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 11, 2016.

Air Force nomination of Lt. Gen. Anthony J. Rock, to be Lieutenant General.

Air Force nomination of Col. James H. Dienst, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nominations beginning with Col. John J. Degoes and ending with Col. Mark A. Koeniger, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 19, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. James R. Barkley and ending with Brig. Gen. Edward P. Yarish, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 11, 2016.

Air Force nomination of Col. Paige P. Hunter, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Thomas J. Owens II, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Robert G. Michnowicz, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Jeffrey C. Coggin, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Kevin C. Wulfhorst, to be Brigadier General.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Air Force nominations beginning with Peter L. Reynolds and ending with Christopher P. Calder, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nomination of Jeremy W. Cannon, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Ted W. Lieu, to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jodene M. Alexander and ending with Deborah J. Robinson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with John Louis Arendale II and ending with Minh-Tri Ba Trinh, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with Bonnie Joy Bosler and ending with Liane L. Weinberger, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with Arden B. Andersen and ending with Mark A. Zelkovic, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nomination of Todd Andrew Luce, to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Lebane S. Hall and ending with David F. Pendleton, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with William Charles Dunlap and ending with Robert K. Mcghee, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with Dawn D. Bellack and ending with Andrew J. Turner, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with Katherine E. Aasen and ending with Christopher M. Zidek, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with Bryan M. Barroqueiro and ending with Joseph Mannino, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Air Force nomination of Bryan M. Davis, to be Major.

Air Force nomination of Todd E. Combs, to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brett C. Anderson and ending with Shahid A. Zaidi, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 11, 2016.

Air Force nominations beginning with Stephen C. Arnason and ending with John R. Yancey, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 11, 2016.

Air Force nominations beginning with Eric E. Abbott and ending with Philip A. Wixom, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 11, 2016.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jane A. Alston and ending with Timothy J. Zielicke, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 11, 2016.

Army nominations beginning with David H. Aamidor and ending with D012522, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Army nominations beginning with Yonatan S. Abebie and ending with D012158, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Army nomination of Peter J. Koch, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Derek P. Jones and ending with William J. Rice, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Army nominations beginning with Michael S. Abbott and ending with D011609, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Army nomination of Denny L. Winningham, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of John C. Baskerville, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Mark L. Coble, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Craig A. Holan and ending with Eric E. Zimmerman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 11, 2016.

Army nomination of Steven R. Berger, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Richard M. Hawkins, to be Major.

Army nomination of Martin S. Kendrick, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with William T. Hennessy and ending with James R. Lenard, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Jeremy D. Adams and ending with Angela S. Zunic, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 11, 2016.

Navy nominations beginning with James E. O'Neil III and ending with Keith M. Roxo, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on October 28, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Denise M. Veyvoda and ending with Robert G. West, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 11, 2016.

Navy nomination of James A. Trotter, to be Lieutenant Commander.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. LEE):

S. 2459. A bill to require the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to be appointed by and with the advice and consent of the Senate; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ROUNDS:

S. 2460. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require reports to Congress on matters of the military departments and Defense Agencies in support of the biennial strategic workforce plans of the Department of Defense; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. HATCH):

S. 2461. A bill to enable civilian research and development of advanced nuclear energy technologies by private and public institutions, to expand theoretical and practical knowledge of nuclear physics, chemistry, and materials science, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL:

S. 2462. A bill to amend section 117 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude Federal student aid from taxable gross income; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2463. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for a percentage of student loan forgiveness for public service employment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 2464. A bill to implement equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States for the right to life of each born and preborn human person; 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. LANKFORD:

S. Res. 348. A resolution supporting efforts to place a woman on the currency of the United States; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 524

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

S. 979

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 979, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 1086

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1086, a bill to establish an insurance policy advisory committee on international capital standards, and for other purposes.

S. 1175

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1175, a bill to improve the safety of hazardous materials rail transportation, and for other purposes.

S. 1503

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1503, a bill to provide for enhanced Federal efforts concerning the prevention, education, treatment, and research activities related to Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases, including the establishment of a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee.

S. 1783

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1783, a bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to clarify a provision relating to the designation of a northern transportation route in Washington County, Utah.

S. 1874

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1874, a bill to provide protections for workers with respect to their right to select or refrain from selecting representation by a labor organization.

S. 2051

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2051, a bill to improve, sustain, and transform the United States Postal Service.

S. 2053

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2053, a bill to require the Secretary of Energy to award grants to expand programs in maritime and energy workforce technical training, and for other purposes.

S. 2144

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2144, a bill to improve the enforcement of sanctions against the Government of North Korea, and for other purposes.

S. 2386

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2386, a bill to authorize the establishment of the Stonewall National Historic Site in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

S. 2418

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2418, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish university labs for student-developed technology-based solutions for countering online recruitment of violent extremists.

S. 2426

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2426, 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.

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2426, supra.

S. 2437

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2437, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the burial of the cremated remains of persons who served as Women's Air Forces Service Pilots in Arlington National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 340

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 340, a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS or Da'esh) is committing genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, and calling

upon the President to work with foreign governments and the United Nations to provide physical protection for ISIS' targets, to support the creation of an international criminal tribunal with jurisdiction to punish these crimes, and to use every reasonable means, including sanctions, to destroy ISIS and disrupt its support networks.

S. RES. 347

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. LEE):

S. 2459. A bill to require the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to be appointed by and with the advice and consent of the Senate; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2459

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 ''Federal Prisons Accountability Act of 2016''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The Director of the Bureau of Prisons leads a law enforcement component of the Department of Justice with a budget that exceeds $6,900,000,000 for fiscal year 2015.

(2) With the exception of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Prisons has the largest operating budget of any unit within the Department of Justice.

(3) The Director of the Bureau of Prisons oversees 122 facilities and is responsible for the welfare of more than 208,000 Federal inmates.

(4) The Director of the Bureau of Prisons supervises more than 39,000 employees, many of whom operate in hazardous environments that involve regular interaction with violent offenders.

(5) The Director of the Bureau of Prisons also serves as the chief operating officer for Federal Prisons Industries, a wholly owned government enterprise of 78 prison factories that directly competes against the private sector, including small businesses, for Government contracts.

(6) Within the Department of Justice, in addition to those officials who oversee litigating components, the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Director of the Community Relations Service, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Director of the National Institute of Justice, the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, the Director of the Office on Violence Against Women, the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Deputy Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Director of the United States Marshals Service, 94 United States Marshals, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice, and the Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices, are all appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(7) Despite the significant budget of the Bureau of Prisons and the vast number of people under the responsibility of the Director of the Bureau of Prisons, the Director is not appointed by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

SEC. 3. DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF PRISONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4041 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking ''appointed by and serving directly under the Attorney General.'' and inserting the following: ''who shall be appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Director shall serve directly under the Attorney General.''.

(b) INCUMBENT.—Notwithstanding the amendment made by subsection (a), the individual serving as the Director of the Bureau of Prisons on the date of enactment of this Act may serve as the Director of the Bureau of Prisons until the date that is 3 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit the ability of the President to appoint the individual serving as the Director of the Bureau of Prisons on the date of enactment of this Act to the position of the Director of the Bureau of Prisons in accordance with section 4041 of title 18, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a).

(d) TERM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 4041 of title 18, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), is amended by inserting after ''consent of the Senate.'' the following: ''The Director shall be appointed for a term of 10 years, except that an individual appointed to the position of Director may continue to serve in that position until another individual is appointed to that position, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. An individual may not serve more than 1 term as Director.''.

(2) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall apply to appointments made on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 348—SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO PLACE A WOMAN ON THE CURRENCY OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. LANKFORD submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

S. RES. 348

Whereas Andrew Jackson, though a military hero in the War of 1812, as President, instated Federal policies, including the Act of May 28, 1830 (4 Stat. 411, chapter 148) (commonly known as the ''Indian Removal Act''), to remove millions of American Indians from their historic homelands to what is now the State of Oklahoma, which accelerated the settlement of Indian lands across the Great Plains and throughout the West;

Whereas the removal policies enforced by Andrew Jackson led to the reductions of the homelands, and ultimately the deaths, of thousands of American Indians across the continent;

Whereas the forced removal of American Indians by Andrew Jackson and the subsequent inhumane settlement of Indian lands represent a major blight on the proud history of the United States; and

Whereas, beginning prior to the founding of the United States and continuing through the present day, the women of the United States, including American Indian women, have worked without due recognition and should be provided the necessary respect and gratitude by all people of the United States for innumerable contributions to the culture, families, economy, innovation, military, and way of life of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports—

(1) efforts to recognize the contributions of countless women to the history of the United States by placing a woman on the currency of the United States;

(2) the removal of Andrew Jackson from the $20 Federal reserve note; and

(3) the placement of a significant woman from the history of the United States on the $20 Federal reserve note.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2016, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2016, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2016, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Healthcare Co-Ops: A Review of the Financial and Oversight Controls.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2016, at 10:45 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Political and Economic Developments in Latin America and Opportunities for U.S. Engagement.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to

meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2016, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Laying Out the Reality of the United States Postal Service.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2016, at 10:45 a.m., in the President's Room in the Capitol.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SR–418 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''VA's Transformation Strategy: Examining the Plan to Modernize VA.''

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

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2464

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2464) to implement equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States for the right to life of each born and preborn human person.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2016, AND TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2016

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Friday, January 22, for a pro forma session only, with no business conducted; further, that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, January 22, it next convene on Tuesday, January 26, at 10 a.m.; 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 be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; that following morning business, the Senate then begin consideration of S. 2012, as under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of the senior Senator from Utah.

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

The President pro tempore, the Senator from Utah.

VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, tomorrow is January 22. This is a date that has become known for two related but radically different reasons. First, it is the anniversary of the Supreme Court's infamous decision in Roe v. Wade that imposed on America the most permissive abortion regime in the world. That decision degraded human life by degrading the Constitution.

At the center of the debate over the morality, legality, or policy of abortion is the fact that each abortion kills a living human being. That this fact is inescapable does not prevent many from trying mightily to escape it, but it cannot be avoided, obscured, or ignored. Let me repeat: Each abortion kills a living human being. That fact informed President Ronald Reagan when he wrote a moving essay in 1983 titled ''Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation.'' He wrote: ''We cannot diminish the value of one category of human life—the unborn—without diminishing the value of all human life.'' The real question, he said, is not about when human life begins but about the value of human life. I believe that remains the real question today.

Starting even before America's founding, the law had been on a steady march toward protecting human beings before birth. The 19th century movement that succeeded in prohibiting abortion except to save the life of the mother was led by medical professionals and civil rights activists. That consensus, however, began to unravel in the 20th century.

In 1948, the United States voted in favor of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes in its preamble the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of ''all members of the human family.'' Like every Member of this body, I am a member of the human family because I am a living human being. So are you, Mr. President; so is each of us. Article 3 of the declaration states that ''everyone has the right to life.''

Words such as ''universal'' and ''inherent'' and ''all'' are unambiguous and clear. Only 25 years later, however, the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision declared quite the opposite—that the right to life is actually not universal and does not belong to every member of the human family. The Court said, in effect, that some members of the human family get to determine whether others live or die.

The contradictions continued. On April 2, 1982, the U.S. Senate ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 6 declares:

Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

This time, it took the Supreme Court just 88 days to send the opposite message. In Planned Parenthood v. Casey, the Court reaffirmed its decision that the U.S. Constitution protects the right to abortion. In other words, the right to life is not inherent, it cannot be protected by law, and it can be arbitrarily taken away.

This sort of confusion about the fundamental value of human life has put the United States in an appalling position. The United States is one of only seven nations in the world to allow abortion even into the sixth month of pregnancy. We join on that list China and North Korea, which are hardly champions of human rights. More children are killed by abortion in 2 days in America than all American servicemembers who have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Last year, we all witnessed the depths to which this degradation of human life leads. Planned Parenthood, the Nation's largest abortion provider, is in the dark business of trafficking in baby body parts and uses word games and spin to hide what it is actually doing. These aren't children or babies, says Planned Parenthood; they are products of conception. These aren't body parts; they are tissue specimens. This should come as no surprise. Stripped of inherent dignity and worth, human beings can easily become commodities.

Last week, in his final State of the Union Address, President Obama said that a future opportunity for our families and a peaceful planet for our kids are within our reach. How can that possibly occur without a basic commitment to the fundamental value of human life and the inherent dignity and worth of every human being?

Let me highlight one more contrast. Early feminists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton published and edited a newspaper titled The Revolution. They editorialized against abortion and even rejected ads for abortifacient drugs, arguing that abortion was a tool for oppressing women. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to receive a degree from an American medical school, strongly opposed abortion. Dr. Charlotte Denman Lozier, another trailblazer for women in the medical profession, helped and defended women who were pressured to have abortions. One writer described Dr. Lozier's work

as ''thoroughly woman-affirming and life-affirming.''

These priorities of being both pro-women and pro-life have today been made enemies instead of allies. Today, the right to abortion and even its actual incidence have, for many, become signs or symbols of progress instead of oppression. This idea that the act of killing a living human being should be held up as a step forward, as a light to guide our way, strikes me as deeply misguided and as something to mourn rather than celebrate. We should instead deepen the conviction that all human beings have inherent dignity and worth. That once was, and should be again, the foundation for our culture, society, and, yes, even our politics.

The Supreme Court not only degraded human life in its Roe v. Wade decision but did so by degrading the Constitution. The Court found a right to abortion not in the real Constitution but in a constitution of its own making. The real Constitution would not allow the Court to impose its own values on the Nation, and so the Court simply created a different constitution that would. By claiming to find an unwritten right in our written Constitution, the Justices seized control of the Constitution that is supposed to control them.

If it is possible, I urge my colleagues to set aside the particular subject of abortion and consider what this really means. All public officials, including Supreme Court Justices, take an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. That Constitution, the real Constitution, is supposed to be the primary way that the American people impose limits on government. In fact, as the Supreme Court recognized in the 1803 Marbury v. Madison decision, the Constitution is written down so that those limits on government will be neither mistaken nor forgotten. In his farewell address of 1796, President George Washington said that the people's control over the Constitution is the heart of our system of government. Our freedom depends on it.

With decisions like Roe v. Wade, however, the Supreme Court takes control of the Constitution away from the people, distorts our way of government, and compromises the freedom the system makes possible. Thomas Jefferson warned against allowing the Supreme Court to twist and shape the Constitution into any form it pleased. Yet that is exactly what the Court does in Roe v. Wade. Instead of conforming their decisions to the real Constitution, the Justices conform the Constitution to their own preferences, values, and agenda. They turn their oath to support and defend the Constitution into an oath to support and defend themselves.

January 22 is known for the decision in which the Supreme Court degraded human life by degrading the Constitution. The Court used judicially tragic means to achieve a morally and culturally tragic end. Thankfully, however, January 22 is also known for another, radically different, event known as the March for Life. Every year for decades, hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens have come here to Washington to do just that—march for life. They represent what once was the norm: the belief that life itself is precious and that each human being has inherent dignity and worth. By coming to Washington year after year, they stake their claim that those principles can once again prevail.

There is reason for hope. More than 70 percent of Americans believe that abortion should be illegal in most or all circumstances. That figure has not changed in more than 40 years. What has changed is that more Americans today identify themselves as pro-life than as pro-choice. Large majorities favor a range of limitations on abortion and in 2014 elected scores of new pro-life legislators at both the State and Federal level. Perhaps most encouraging of all, the percentage of young people who believe that abortion should not be permitted in most or all circumstances has risen steadily and significantly. The number of abortions reported each year to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has dropped by 50 percent in the last 25 years.

The organization Feminists for Life was founded in 1972 before Roe v. Wade sent us into this tailspin. They have said for years that women deserve better than abortion. Life, not death, should be our priority.

I hope and pray that more and more of us will be—in large and small ways each and every day—marching for life.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 2:30 p.m., adjourned until Friday, January 22, 2016, at 10 a.m.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S141–S163

Measures Introduced: Six bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 2459–2464, and S. Res. 348. **Page S160**

Veto Messages:

Waters of the United States: Senate continued consideration of the veto message to accompany 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 Federal Water Pollution Control Act. **Pages S143–47**

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

By 52 yeas to 40 nays (Vote No. 5), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on the veto message to accompany the joint resolution. **Pages S146–47**

Cloture not having been invoked, under the previous order of Wednesday, January 20, 2016, the veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 22, was indefinitely postponed. **Page S147**

Energy Policy Modernization Act—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that following morning business on Tuesday, January 26, 2016, Senate begin consideration of S. 2012, to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, with a period for debate only until 3 p.m. **Page S143**

Vazquez Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 2:15 p.m., on Tuesday, January 26, 2016, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of John Michael Vazquez, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey; that there be 15 minutes for debate on confirmation of the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote, without intervening action or debate, on confirmation of the nomination. **Page S143**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Pages S141–42, S157**

Measures Read the First Time: **Pages S157, S162**

Executive Communications: **Pages S157–59**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S159–60**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S160–61**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Page S161**

Additional Statements: **Pages S156–57**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S161–62**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—5) **Pages S146–47**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 2:30 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Friday, January 22, 2016. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S162.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

NOMINATION

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Eric K. Fanning, of the District of Columbia, to be Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense, after the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported 3,178 nominations in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY TECHNOLOGIES

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the status of innovative technologies within the automotive industry, after receiving testimony from David Friedman, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy;

Chris Gearhart, Director, Transportation and Hydrogen Systems Center, National Renewable Energy Laboratory; Mitch Bainwol, Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, and Genevieve Cullen, Electric Drive Transportation Association, both of Washington, D.C.; and Xavier Mosquet, The Boston Consulting Group, Troy, Michigan.

HEALTHCARE CO-OPS

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine healthcare co-ops, focusing on a review of the financial and oversight controls, after receiving testimony from Andy Slavitt, Acting Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services.

DEVELOPMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine political and economic developments in Latin America and opportunities for United States engagement, after receiving testimony from Thomas F. McLarty, III, former White House Chief of Staff and Special Envoy to the Americas, McLarty Associates, and Eric Farnsworth, Council of the Americas and Americas Society, both of Washington, D.C.; and Shannon K. O'Neil, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, New York.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine laying out the reality of the Postal Service, including S. 2051, to improve, sustain, and transform the United States Postal Service, after receiving testimony from Megan J. Brennan, Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer, and David C. Williams, Inspector General, both of the Postal Service; Robert G. Taub, Acting Chairman, Postal Regulatory Commission; Lori Rectanus, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, Government Accountability Office; James E. Millstein, former Department of the Treasury Chief Restructuring Officer, Millstein and Co., and Fredric V. Rolando, National Association of Letter Carriers, both of Washington, D.C.; John Hutcheson III, National Newspaper Association, Springfield, Illinois; and Kathy Collins, Domtar Paper Company, Rothschild, Wisconsin, on behalf of the American Forest and Paper Association.

MODERNIZING THE VA

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Department of Veterans Affairs' transformation strategy, focusing on examining the plan to modernize the Department of Veterans Affairs, after receiving testimony from Robert A. McDonald, Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

The House was not in session today. The House is scheduled to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday, January 25, 2016, pursuant to the provisions of H. Con. Res. 107.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2016

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

10 a.m., Friday, January 22

Senate Chamber

Program for Friday: Senate will meet in a pro forma session.

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

2 p.m., Monday, January 25

House Chamber

Program for Monday: The House is scheduled to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday, January 25, 2016, pursuant to the provisions of H. Con. Res. 107.

Congressional Record

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