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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 16, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE BOST to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

WIDESPREAD FLOODING IN LOUISIANA

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to my home State of Louisiana, where thousands of people throughout the State, and in my congressional district particularly, are dealing with the aftermath of widespread flooding.

Beginning on Wednesday of last week, heavy rains began falling across northeast Louisiana. By Friday, we had recorded over 2 feet of rain. Creeks and lakes overflowed. Water topped levees and spilled into neighborhoods. State highways looked like rivers, and parking lots looked like ponds.

Since the flood began, I have visited a number of parishes throughout my district. Whether it was in north, central, or southeast Louisiana, the one constant was there were far, far too many people hurting.

As of yesterday, at least four people had died from the flood in Louisiana. Nearly 15,000 homes had been reported damaged, and the number will definitely grow. More than 6,800 people have requested help from FEMA, and that number will likely grow as well.

Lives were changed last week, and we have a long way to go to recover. The President has approved, at the request of the Governor, Federal disaster aid for most parishes affected. This is a great, great thing, and we need it. I appreciate that support very much.

I have lived in Louisiana all my life. I still live in a soybean field in northeast Louisiana not far from where I grew up in a cornfield, also close to my home. I have seen a lot of things in my time and I have seen a lot of rain come, but I have never seen as much rain as we received last week.

Unfortunately, Louisiana is all too familiar with disasters. In the last 10 years, we have seen five hurricanes, an oil spill, and now this horrific flooding. But each time we face adversity, Louisiana and her people respond. We follow Christ's commandment, which is to love and help one another.

I have been so inspired by the way our communities across Louisiana have answered the call to serve: packing sandbags in the wee hours of the morning, volunteering at shelters, cooking food for relief workers, housing stranded family members; and sometimes people who are not even known to these people, they are taking them into their homes. The acts of kindness just keep coming and coming, and we need more of them to keep coming.

There is one group of individuals I want to especially recognize, and that is our first responders. The National Guard has rescued over 3,295 people so far. Sheriffs, deputies, other law enforcement officials, and firefighters are still tallying their numbers because they have saved so many lives. These men and women have logged countless hours and put themselves in harm's way to save the lives of others.

I have heard stories of some officers using makeshift rafts to pull people from flooded homes and getting them out before waters overtook their home.

I have seen videos of the National Guard with Black Hawk helicopters rappelling into floodwaters and pulling people to safety who were clinging to trees. I saw one instance where a gentleman had been in a tree for up to 2 days.

It is just incredible what our first responders have done.

There is another story about our power company employees saving a man whose truck was swept off the road by water. Again, he had been in a tree, hanging on for life, for 2 full days before he was saved.

Story after story in parish after parish show the incredible strength our Louisianians have and the first responders' abilities and their caring and what they have done for our State.

The rains have stopped for now, but we are not in the clear by any means. The water is pushing most of our rivers over their flood stages in a big, big way. I hope another round of floods isn't on the way.

In Louisiana, we know how to bounce back from adversity, but we will only do so with the continued generosity of those who are in a position to help others. I ask the Nation to remember Louisiana in its prayers as we continue and start the process of rebuilding.

A REALISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE AGENDA

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the tortured Presidential nominating process continues with generalities and insults, but maybe we could avert our eyes and attention for a moment and consider some real challenges that we face closer at hand.

The backdrop in the metropolitan area in Washington, D.C., is that D.C. Metro has shut down for the entire day to deal with safety concerns—an unprecedented step. The bigger issue for most people in the region, for most riders and potential users, is the system's reliability.

It is a symbol of a lack of resources and a lack of leadership, not just for Metro, but for the States of Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Government itself. They have, sadly, been lacking in leadership, in vision, and providing the resources for this vital system for a region of approximately 4 million people.

At the same time, we have a looming water and sewer crisis, almost 2 million miles of pipe, in some cases long past its useful life. A water main breaks every 2 minutes. We have serious problems with system reliability with sewage.

The city of Flint, Michigan, and its terrible situation with lead in the drinking water has captured attention, but it has also pointed out for people who look deeper that this is a problem that afflicts communities across the country. We have, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers, an overall grade, as a country, of D dealing with sewer and water challenges.

What if the major candidates would train their attention on serious proposals to deal with the infrastructure crisis already upon us? Not mere generalities, but let's talk about how they would pay for it. What is their vision to deal with multiple needs, and how would they set priorities?

It is not really that hard. In a number of very red States, governments have stepped up to raise the gas tax and fund transportation. In metropolitan communities across the country, in red States and blue, people are dealing with their challenges, proposing to their communities funding and vision to solve the problem.

I have got bipartisan legislation to establish a Federal water infrastructure trust fund to help start in that regard.

We ought to fix the transportation funding. There is broad support amongst labor, business, profession AAA truckers to raise the gas tax and be able to deal with our transportation challenges.

Finally, we should embrace technology in transportation, things from self-driving, autonomous vehicles, electronic payment for road systems, a road user charge being experimented on in the State of Oregon. These are mechanisms that would help us update, modernize, and make these systems more effective.

And by the way, when you hear all those candidates talking about strengthening the middle class and the economy, these proposals would put millions of people to work at family-wage jobs in every community across America. It would strengthen safety and liveability and bring people together.

You know, when we have faced up to infrastructure challenges, whether it is Dwight Eisenhower's interstate freeway system, what we have done in the past with clean water and clean air, those are things that are broadly supported by Americans. An infrastructure agenda, a realistic infrastructure agenda has the potential of bringing people together while it strengthens America, and it would certainly be a nice change of pace.

HONORING THE LIFE OF KRIS ANNE VOGELPOHL

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and to celebrate the life of Kris Anne Vogelpohl of Galveston. Many know Kris Anne Vogelpohl as the matriarch of the Galveston County Republican Party.

Kris Anne made her way from Colorado to Galveston, where she became chief therapeutic dietician at the University of Texas Medical Branch in 1950. It was at UTMB where she met her future husband, Dr. Elmer Vogelpohl.

Kris Anne didn't waste any time getting involved in the community and local politics, too. In fact, in 1955, Kris Anne became one of the founding members of the Galveston Republican Women. From there, she solidified her GOP trailblazer status by becoming chairwoman of the Galveston Republican Party, where she thereupon built a strong foundation for the party to grow and build on.

In addition to her political service, Kris Anne was an avid philanthropist within the community. One of the organizations she invested her time in was the Salvation Army, where she joined their county advisory board in 1959.

Kris Anne's unwavering commitment to the betterment of society was a sight to behold, Mr. Speaker. She made everyone feel so welcomed. She empowered so many people to take charge and get involved. Her enthusiasm for making our county, our State, and our country even greater was infectious. The proof is in the pudding. Galveston has become one of the strongest Republican counties along the Gulf Coast and in Texas.

Dr. Vogelpohl could often be seen with Kris Anne in event after event all over Galveston County. You talk about stalwarts, Mr. Speaker. My prayer is that we all be such sterling examples to those who come behind us. Lord knows that Dr. Elmer, as I call him, and Kris Anne were—or make that are, quite frankly.

Kris Anne lived to be 90 years old. She was married for 55 years and is survived by her husband, two children, and six grandchildren.

Kris Anne may be gone, but in reality she is still here. She will forever be in the hearts and minds of the people she touched.

Mr. Speaker, my thoughts and my prayers are with Dr. Elmer, their children, their grandchildren, and with the great multitude of friends she served. My prayer is also may the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, even the Lord Jesus Christ, wrap them up in His loving arms and comfort them. May He bless them and keep them. May God bless them all, and may God bless the great State of Texas and Galveston County that Kris Anne loved so much.

In a wonderful way, He has been blessing us. He loaned us Kris Anne.

□ 1015

HONORING THE LIFE OF OFFICER JACAI COLSON

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

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to pay tribute and honor the life of Prince George's County Police Officer Jacai Colson, who was killed in the line of duty.

Line-of-duty deaths are always difficult to bear. A police officer or another first responder leaves their home, their station, or their vehicle, and their loved one, coworker, or partner expects to see them return.

My heart breaks for Jacai's loved ones and for the tight-knit community that is the Prince George's County Police Department.

On March 12, 2016, an off-duty detective, Police Officer First Class Jacai Colson, arrived at the District 3 police station in Landover, Maryland, with the intent of visiting a fellow officer, when matters took an unexpected turn for the worse.

We will continue to learn the details of this tragedy in the coming days. What we do know is that Officer Colson's actions saved lives and allowed his fellow officers to neutralize the threat, even as he made the ultimate sacrifice.

On behalf of the citizens of the Fourth Congressional District of Maryland, I want to extend my appreciation to Officer Colson for his selfless and heroic actions and his relentless dedication to public service.

I would like to remember the legacy Officer Colson leaves behind. He was a Pennsylvania native who played quarterback at Chichester High School in

Boothwyn, Pennsylvania, where he graduated.

Officer Colson then went on to play wide receiver and defensive back at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia. His college football coach recalled Colson as ''a really respectful kid and just a high-character young man. To be honest, he wasn't a great player, but he was a really great person.''

Officer Jacai Colson was the grandson of a career police officer. He himself joined the Prince George's County Police Department. After 2 years of service on the force, he joined the narcotics department. Officer Colson worked as an undercover detective. Later this week would have been his 29th birthday.

I well know how difficult a job our local police officers have. They are tasked with the tremendous responsibility of meeting the increasingly diverse needs of growing populations with diminishing resources.

At a time of so much national discussion about the relationship of law enforcement to our local communities, Officer Colson reminds us all of the important service and sacrifice of our men and women in blue.

Unfortunately, his death makes three officers that have been shot and killed in Maryland in 2016. Last month two officers from the Harford County Sheriff's Office were fatally shot: Senior Deputy Mark Logsdon and Senior Deputy Patrick Dailey.

Today our police officers are being asked to be the first line of defense in our war on terror in addition to carrying out more traditional police work.

I want to thank them for their commitment to the citizens and families of this great State. They are Maryland's heroes, and they have my utmost respect and support.

Officer Jacai Colson's record of service was characterized by sacrifice, hard work, dedication to duty, and, most of all, by achievement. He leaves behind a legacy of service that others can and should aspire to.

Now that his time on Earth has come to a needlessly premature end, it is my hope that Officer Jacai Colson has found the peace he has earned. On behalf of this House, I extend my sincerest gratitude and condolences to James and Sheila Colson, his parents; his entire family; friends; Prince George's County Police Chief Hank Stawinski; Major Kathleen Mills, District 3 Commander; the entire Prince George's County Police Department; and the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 89.

May God continue to comfort and sustain each of you.

AMICUS BRIEF ON BEHALF OF THE U.S. V. TEXAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 639.

Mr. Speaker, we are a Nation of immigrants. But, more importantly, we are a Nation of laws. We are also a Nation governed by a Constitution, a Constitution designed by our Founders to protect the people from government.

This same Constitution enumerates specific powers to the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, these same powers that this President has decided he does not need to uphold.

As a result, we, as a united legislative body, will act this week against the President's executive amnesty and overreach. We must act because it is time that Congress—Republicans and Democrats—stand up for the Constitution of the United States and against President Obama, who has decided to turn his back on the American people.

We must act because the security and economic opportunity that Americans are so desperate for today come with respecting, not undermining, the spirit of self-government for which our Nation was founded.

Mr. Speaker, the President knows that he is not permitted to write laws. Yet, through his executive amnesty, he is directly attacking Congress' Article I power.

Today Congress will once again say no to President Obama. We will come together as an institution representing the American people to promote self-government.

I will vote in favor of the resolution on behalf of the great people of Missouri's Second Congressional District and in defense of the powerful words of James Madison in 1788:

''The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.''

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution and prevent this very tyranny we see today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

GENOCIDE OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, there were two votes that occurred earlier this week on House Concurrent Resolution 75 and House Concurrent Resolution 121, which deal with very important and complex issues that I would like to talk about this morning.

I cosponsored and voted for House Concurrent Resolution 75 because of my grave concern about the genocide occurring against Christians, Alawites, Shiites, Druze, Yazidis, and other religious minorities in Syria.

However, I was extremely disappointed by amendment language that was later added to this resolution that provides cover or an excuse for ISIS and other terrorist organizations committing this genocide.

Specifically, the language I object to is the following: ''The protracted Syrian civil war and the indiscriminate violence of the Assad regime have contributed to the growth of ISIL and will continue to do so as long as this conflict continues.''

I fully reject this amendment to the resolution because it gives moral legitimacy to the actions of ISIS, al Qaeda, and others who are committing genocide against Christians, Yazidis, and other religious minorities in Syria.

This amendment is an obvious attempt to make ISIS look like their cause is legitimate. This is absolutely unacceptable and undermines the very heart and intent of this resolution.

This is very unfortunate because the problem of the genocide against Christians, Yazidis, and other religious minorities in Syria is very serious.

In fact, the main area in Syria where Christians and other religious minorities have any protection today from being slaughtered and where they can practice their religious faith without fear of prosecution is in the territory that is still controlled by the Syrian Government of Assad.

The reality is that the language added to this resolution, coupled with its sister resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 121, is really aimed at justifying the overthrow of Assad, the result of which would be a complete assault and elimination of Christians and other religious minorities in Syria.

The fact that this resolution, which was originally introduced to increase protection for Christians, Yazidis and other religious minorities, has now been hijacked so that it becomes a vehicle to increase the likelihood of an even greater genocide against those religious minorities is an absolute disgrace.

The reality is that, if the Assad regime is overthrown tomorrow, every Christian, every Yazidi, and every other religious minority and ethnic minority in Syria will be in even greater danger than ever before from the genocide being perpetrated by ISIS, al Qaeda, and others who are slaughtering them.

This resolution is no longer a sincere effort to protect religious minorities. It has instead become a resolution to give more legitimacy to ISIS and al Qaeda's genocidal activities and would bring about an even greater genocide of those religious minorities by eliminating the only area where they now have refuge.

RECOGNIZING PRINCETON, INDIANA

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

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to an outstanding community in Indiana's Eighth Congressional District.

It is no secret that the Hoosier State is home to hardworking, innovative, and compassionate people. In the Eighth District, we are leading the way.

Today I want to highlight a couple of great accomplishments in Princeton, Indiana.

Earlier this month high school senior Jackie Young, a star guard at Princeton Community High School, was awarded the Naismith Trophy. This prestigious award is presented annually to the men and women's college and high school basketball players who achieve great success on the court and solidifies Jackie as the Nation's top high school woman basketball player.

To us in southern Indiana, the award comes as no surprise. With 3,268 career points, Jackie is Indiana's all-time leading scorer. She is a natural leader on and off the court.

Congratulations to Jackie. We wish her all the best as she prepares for her next step, playing for Notre Dame.

Additionally, a community leader and anchor of our local economy, Toyota Motor Manufacturing, will soon celebrate the 20th anniversary of its ground breaking in Gibson County.

Over the past 20 years, the plant has been a leader in economic development for our region, providing thousands of jobs and supporting local organizations.

I have had the pleasure of meeting many of the hardworking and dedicated team members at Toyota in Princeton. These men and women make quality products in Indiana that are being sold across the country and around the world, and they take pride in doing it.

On behalf of all Hoosiers across the Eighth District, I thank everyone at Toyota Motor Manufacturing for your continued commitment to our community and congratulate them on this tremendous milestone.

As one of Indiana's designated Stellar Communities, Princeton is, without a doubt, a shining example of what our great State has to offer. It is an honor and privilege to represent the people of Gibson County and Princeton here in Congress.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WENONAH HIGH SCHOOL LADY DRAGONS ON THIRD CONSECUTIVE ALABAMA GIRLS 5A BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

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

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I have the great pleasure of rising today for the third time in 3 years to congratulate the Wenonah High School Lady Dragons on winning their third consecutive Alabama girls class 5A basketball championship.

The Lady Dragons beat Central High School from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 58–33, imploring what the local news said was a suffocating pressure defense to cruise to their third consecutive title on March 5, 2016, at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex Legacy Arena in Birmingham, Alabama. The Wenonah Lady Dragons forced 32 turnovers that resulted in 19 points on their way to victory.

''The sign on our wall says 'Discipline plus defense equals championships,''' said Wenonah High School coach Emanuel Bell. ''We're going to press. That's what we do.'' They put pressure on the other side.

□ 1030

The MVP of the game was Alexus Dye, who scored 12 points and grabbed 10 rebounds. ''Our defense is what got us here and led us to the win,'' said Dye.

The other star of the team was Wenonah's very own Kaitlyn Rodgers, who scored 12 points, grabbed 14 rebounds, blocked 6 shots, handed out 3 assists, and added 2 steals. ''This is what we came here for, and we want to go out with a bang,'' said Rodgers.

Mr. Speaker, more noteworthy is the fact that, according to Coach Bell, ''Every kid on my time averages a 3.0 GPA or higher. It's easy to coach players with academic and athletic talent,'' says Coach Bell.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate the month of March as Women's History Month, recognizing trailblazing women throughout our history, clearly these young women have blazed their own remarkable path, both athletically and academically as student athletes, and we are happy, proud to commend them.

So on behalf of Alabama's Seventh Congressional District, I want to extend a heartfelt congratulations to these outstanding players and to Coach Bell.

While March Madness has gripped the rest of the State and the Nation, in Birmingham, Alabama, we are very proud of Wenonah High School's Lady Dragons. I am confident that these young ladies have bright futures ahead of them, and we will look back on these 3 consecutive years of championship wins with great accomplishment and pride.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask Your blessing upon this assembly and upon all who call upon Your name. Send Your Spirit to fill their hearts with those divine gifts You have prepared for them.

May Your grace find expression in their compassion for the weak and the poor among us, and may Your mercy encourage good will in all they do and accomplish this day.

As the Members of the people's House face the demands of our time, grant them and us all Your peace and strength, that we might act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with You.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

ISIL-DAESH CHEMICAL ATTACKS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this weekend we learned that ISIL/Daesh has continued their use of chemical attacks against innocent civilians, including children, with two attacks in northern Iraq. Over 600 people suffered burns, suffocation, and dehydration. And, sadly, a young child, Fatima, died from Saturday's murderous attack.

Officials have confirmed that ISIL has used chlorine and low-grade mustard gas to kill, incapacitate, and incite fear. Recent news reports say ISIL developed a special unit for chemical and biological attacks, which is a threat to American families.

It is sad that the President's legacy is weakness. He has not submitted a plan to Congress to defeat ISIL, and has repeatedly belittled their threat of

mass murder to American families. His legacy of failure is drowned children fleeing violence and dead children from chemical attacks.

I am grateful that the House of Representatives took a decisive stance against ISIL this week, accurately calling actions against Christians and other minorities genocide.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President, by his actions, never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

God bless Hammond School.

STOP THE GENOCIDE

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 75, which was passed unanimously Monday evening by the House. I regret that a family commitment kept me from being present for the vote on this important bill, which I am proud to cosponsor.

It has been with horror and dismay that we have watched the barbaric acts of ISIL against ethnic and religious minorities in Syria and Iraq. Proud people, including many Christians who have lived in the region for centuries, have been wiped out in a campaign of rape, forced conversion, and murder.

The crimes qualify as genocide, and they must be called as such. The global community has a duty, stemming both from the Genocide Convention and our common humanity, to destroy and defeat ISIL and to provide safe haven for those fleeing their monstrous acts.

The campaign of genocide against religious and ethnic minorities in Syria and Iraq must be stopped, and those responsible must face justice.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Women's History Month.

Since President Reagan's administration, we have designated the month of March as a time to acknowledge the enormous impact that generations of women have had on all of our lives.

I have been blessed to have many strong women in my life, from the medical professionals who worked by my side at both the Iron Mountain VA and Dickinson Memorial Hospital to the strong women in my family, and, finally, the many Members of Congress that I am humbled to serve beside today.

It is important to recognize the diverse and irreplaceable contributions that these women and so many others have made to our society while also acknowledging that there is still much work to be done.

While we recognize Women's History Month this March, we should honor the important role that women play in our society every day and do our part to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to make their mark in the future.

BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of Brain Awareness Week, part of a global campaign to increase public awareness about the benefits of brain research and the progress that has been made to address traumatic brain injuries.

TBIs are a significant health issue affecting our servicemembers, veterans, athletes and ordinary citizens. Military members are at increased risk for sustaining a TBI compared to civilians.

That is why I authored a law requiring the VA to assess its capacity to treat veterans with TBI and develop policies for TBI care and rehabilitation.

I recently toured the Stanford Neurosciences Institute to see how research can prevent and treat brain injuries and chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, a condition that typically affects people who experience repetitive brain traumas. Just this week the NFL admitted that there is a connection between football and CTE.

I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing Brain Awareness Week.

HONORING GENERAL JOHN ''DOC'' BAHNSEN, JR.

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

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Brigadier General John ''Doc'' Bahnsen, Jr., a Hancock County, West Virginia, resident who was recently recognized as a 2016 West Point Distinguished Graduate. I am honored to count Doc and his wife Peggy as my friends, and I cannot think of a man more deserving of this award.

General Bahnsen graduated from West Point in 1956 and began a 30-year career in the Army, including two tours in Vietnam. A member of the air cavalry, he piloted Hueys under fire.

He was one of the most highly decorated officers in Vietnam and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, five Silver Stars, and two Purple Hearts.

After Vietnam, General Bahnsen continued his service and helped to establish the National Training Center, where our soldiers prepare for deployment overseas.

In retirement, Doc has remained an active alumni at the Academy. He frequently travels to West Point to give lectures to cadets and is a leading booster for the West Point Rugby Team.

General Bahnsen is a true role model for America, and we should all strive to ascribe to his virtues. Through a life of service, he has proven how dedication, pragmatism, and patriotism can help make this country great again.

LOUIS VAN IERSEL POST OFFICE

(Ms. JUDY CHU of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mr. Louis Van Iersel by introducing a bill to rename the Sierra Madre post office in his memory.

Mr. Van Iersel's incredible life is a true example of the American Dream. He arrived in the United States as an immigrant from the Netherlands in 1917 and enlisted in the U.S. Army the very next day. He learned English while working in the kitchen before moving on to the battlefield.

For his acts of bravery that saved over 1,000 American lives on a single mission, Mr. Van Iersel was awarded our Nation's highest recognition, the Medal of Honor.

After the war, Mr. Van Iersel moved to my district, in the city of Sierra Madre, to raise his family. But when World War II began, Mr. Van Iersel, along with his three sons, reenlisted, this time serving in the Marines.

An immigrant, veteran, father, and husband, Mr. Van Iersel exemplified courage and service to his country. It is my honor to memorialize him forever in this way.

HEIDI LAWRENCE'S STORY

(Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, West Virginia's families are struggling to make ends meet due to the war on coal. As coal mines close due to crushing regulations from this administration, families are forced to make tough choices to survive.

Heidi Lawrence lives with her family in Cyclone, West Virginia. Her husband lost his coal-mining job more than 5 months ago. Here is her story:

> We are doing everything we can do to pay our bills and raise our three kids.
>
> We have already lost vehicles because it takes everything that he gets in unemployment to pay the house payment and power bill, two things that we have to try to keep, not to mention all the other bills that just don't get paid because we can't afford them.
>
> My husband is a hardworking man. He has worked for 8 years in the coal mines for what we have, and we are now losing it.

Mr. Speaker, Heidi is a true West Virginia coal voice. Her family is an example of what happens when Washington regulates our coal jobs out of existence.

BLEEDING DISORDERS AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. CARNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show my support for Americans of all ages who have been affected by bleeding disorders.

Last month I met with Cole, a 10-year-old from my home State of Delaware. Cole has hemophilia, and he and his family struggle to afford the costly treatments he relies on.

Hearing Cole's story underlined the financial burden diseases like hemophilia place on many hardworking Americans. Hundreds of thousands of families across our country shoulder both the financial and emotional hardships that come with bleeding disorders.

That is why I am speaking today in recognition of Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month. This is not only an opportunity to raise awareness, but also to stress the importance of continued funding for research on diseases like this.

In Delaware, we are lucky to have the Nemours Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders. Their research efforts are leading the way to better treatments for those with bleeding disorders, but it is not enough.

I urge my colleagues to support research for these and other diseases so that those with chronic illnesses can look forward to a brighter future.

PENN STATE'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING NEXT-GENERATION ELECTRONICS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Penn State University, which is located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, on receiving a nearly $18 million grant from the National Science Foundation.

These grant funds will be used over the next 5 years and will be dedicated to the growth of two-dimensional crystals in order to research how they can be used in next-generation electronics. This is very technical work which, at times, involves the use of materials only a few atoms thick.

Eventually, this research is expected to play a significant role in the development of electronics which are faster, use less energy, and can be built on flexible surfaces.

This grant for Penn State's Materials Research Institute was only one of two in the Nation awarded by the National Science Foundation.

I am proud to see such groundbreaking research happening at Penn State. It stands as proof of the university's leadership in this area of research, along with a testament to the skills of its faculty. I know this funding will be put to great use.

□ 1215

GEORGIA-12 YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2016

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, my office hosted the first-ever Georgia-12 Youth Leadership Summit at Georgia Southern University. Over 400 students and educators from around Georgia's 12th Congressional District represented their high schools at the summit. I was amazed by the turnout. The energy of the students was inspiring.

Many thanks to Colonel Sam Anderson, Garrison Commander at Fort Gordon; Stephanie Miller, morning host of Hot Country Hits Y96; Tyson Summers, head football coach at Georgia Southern University; and Congressman TOM GRAVES of the 14th District of Georgia, for sharing their experiences with these young leaders.

These students are the future leaders of Georgia and our country, and I want them to realize their potential, and I want to see them succeed.

I would like to give a special thanks to Georgia Southern University for hosting us, and members of my staff for their hard work in organizing and setting up this event.

Our district is very fortunate to have these great students and educators. It was evident that the young folks of Georgia-12 are an exceptional class of leaders who will step up to any occasion.

What a wonderful honor it was to host this important event last Thursday in Statesboro, Georgia.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF COLONEL FREDRICK VAN HORN

(Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Colonel Frederick Earl Van Horn for more than 20 years of dedicated service at Georgia Military College, an outstanding educational institution in Milledgeville, Georgia.

Prior to his tenure at GMC, Colonel Van Horn honorably served our Nation in the U.S. Army, where he completed three tours of duty in Germany, one in Italy, and a 2-year combat tour in Vietnam. His military achievements and medals include a Purple Heart.

Colonel Van Horn wore many hats at GMC, including commander of cadets, dean of students, adjunct professor of ethics, director of character education, executive vice president, and interim president.

But I commend him most for instilling the core values of honor, duty, and country into our students, and preparing the next generation for the challenges of the upcoming decades. He has distinguished himself as a servant-leader of the highest character and integrity.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Colonel Fred Van Horn on his retirement, and for his diligent, effective, and ardent leadership to GMC and our Nation.

I am grateful to have him in the Tenth District of Georgia. I sincerely thank him for his service and unyielding commitment to our State, and I wish Fred and his family the best on his retirement.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 16, 2016.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 16, 2016 at 9:20 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 337.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

SMALL BUSINESS BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 4596.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 640, I call up the bill (H.R. 4596) to ensure that small business providers of broadband Internet access service can devote resources to broadband deployment rather than compliance with cumbersome regulatory requirements, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 640, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Energy and Commerce, printed in the bill, shall be considered as adopted, and the bill, as amended, shall be considered read.

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

H.R. 4596

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 ''Small Business Broadband Deployment Act''.

SEC. 2. EXCEPTION TO ENHANCEMENT TO TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The enhancements to the transparency rule of the Federal Communications Commission under section 8.3 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, as described in paragraphs 162 through 184 of the Report and Order on Remand, Declaratory Ruling, and Order of the Federal Communications Commission with regard to protecting and promoting the open Internet (adopted February 26, 2015) (FCC 15–24), shall not apply to any small business.

(b) SUNSET.—Subsection (a) shall not have any force or effect after the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) REPORT BY FCC.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Communications Commission shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that contains the recommendations of the Commission (and data supporting such recommendations) regarding—

(1) whether the exception provided by subsection (a) should be made permanent; and

(2) whether the definition of the term ''small business'' for purposes of such exception should be modified from the definition in subsection (d)(2).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.—The term ''broadband Internet access service'' has the meaning given such term in section 8.2 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations.

(2) SMALL BUSINESS.—The term ''small business'' means any provider of broadband Internet access service that has not more than 250,000 subscribers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) and the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

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

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important responsibilities we have as a Congress, I think, is to protect and advocate for those who may not have the power themselves or the influence or the armies of lawyers to contend with the redtape that all too often is created by our own government.

The bill we are considering today helps them. It does just that. It relieves, we believe, an unnecessary regulatory burden on really small Internet service providers, the little ISPs out there all over our districts across the land that are struggling to compete in this marketplace.

By extending an exemption to the Federal Communications Commission's enhanced transparency rules, this bill allows these small businesses to focus on their core mission which, by the way, is providing broadband Internet access to customers all across America.

Over the last few months, we have spent a great deal of time focused on this issue. We first raised concerns with the Federal Communications Commission itself in a November letter from the Republican members of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee, as well as the Small Business Committee.

We urged the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Tom Wheeler, to not only make the exemption that they had already had in their rules permanent, but also to raise that threshold for defining what a small business is to bring it in line with the definitions previously blessed by the Small Business Administration itself.

Well, the FCC, instead, extended the exemption for just 1 year. That is hardly time enough from these very onerous reporting requirements to make a difference, a 1-year extension.

Despite the overwhelming support in the record for a permanent extension, it was clear that Congress needed to act because the FCC wouldn't. So I introduced a discussion draft to get the conversation going that would permanently extend the exemption and would increase the threshold by defining a small business to match the definition used by the Small Business Administration itself.

We had a hearing in January on this draft. We heard from a small business, an Internet service provider from a small community, who shared the dilemma that I think was indicative of what other small ISPs face in these circumstances.

Should they put up new equipment and expand and improve their service?

Or if they have to comply with all these reporting requirements called for by the FCC, they said, look, I am going to have to spend the money, instead, on hiring lawyers and other compliance officers to meet a reporting requirement that is new.

Should they improve service for customers, or should they devote those financial resources to sifting through regulatory language and drafting expensive and extensive reports on esoteric metrics like ''packet loss''?

Now, often these small Internet service providers provide service to areas in the country that are rural, very rural, remote, or may not be as easy to serve or provide competitive options to customers of larger ISPs.

We should be making all efforts to promote the viability of these upstarts, these businesses, these small entrepreneurs that are trying to fill the gaps, serve and compete in this very competitive marketplace.

We should not be saddling them with additional requirements designed to snuff them out, basically, and that would make it more difficult for them to do the business that they want to participate in.

While there was some initial disagreement about how to ease some of these regulatory burdens, Mr. Speaker, Representative LOEBSACK and I were able to come to a compromise through some very serious negotiations. It worked out well, the legislative process.

We both agreed there is a problem. We said, okay, I don't really like this number; what about that number? We kept a focus on the mission and on the goal, which was to prevent this overreach of the Federal Government in the regulatory realm.

So in our amended bill, we extend the exemption from this reporting requirement to 5 years. It seems like a reasonable number. This gives greater regulatory certainty to these very small Internet service providers looking for stability and predictability when they are making some, frankly, pretty expensive investment decisions on equipment and access and expansion.

In addition, we increased the threshold for what is defining a small business from what the FCC had, and required the Federal Communications Commission to report back to Congress on this exemption, along with data about small ISPs that is currently lacking.

They don't have all the data we think they need, so as their overseer, we are telling the FCC, go look at this, tell us what it means, come back to us. And we put a sunset on this as well so that Congress will have the opportunity in a couple of years to come back and say this makes sense; does it still make sense; is it in the best interest of consumers and innovation and development of technology in the marketplace.

In the end, I think this legislation represents a really solid, thoughtful compromise that will relieve the burdens for our smallest Internet service providers while leaving in place really important protections for consumers, Mr. Speaker.

See, this does not wipe out what they have to do to serve customers, the laws they have to follow, all that. That stays. We just said, you don't have to do this really burdensome, costly, technical reporting to the government.

It is important to note that this bill does not affect the bright-line rules for managing traffic or the transparency rules adopted in the FCC's 2010 rules. Customers will continue to have access to those disclosures they have come to expect, with the information needed to make informed decisions about their Internet service.

So I would like to thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, the ranking member of the subcommittee, Ms. ESHOO, as well as, certainly, Mr. LOEBSACK, for working well with us on this bill.

I would like to particularly thank Kelsey Guyselman, from the majority committee staff, and Ashley Shillingsburg from Representative LOEBSACK's staff—I hope I said that right—for their hard work in getting together and working this out.

This bipartisan process has resulted in a strong piece of legislation, and I am confident it will actually protect many and promote continued network investment and build-out by small business so we have a more vibrant, competitive marketplace and more service into areas that otherwise might

not ever get access to high-speed broadband which, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is really important in places like Tennessee and Oregon and Iowa.

This legislation represents a commonsense approach to a problem that directly impacts so many of our constituents, and this solution will enable our country to continue its leadership in broadband deployment.

So I would urge my colleagues to join us in this bipartisan legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, broadband development is a critical issue for my home State of Iowa, as it is for Congressman WALDEN's home State of Oregon, as it is for so many rural areas, in particular.

We all know how important Internet access is for our constituents. Our students need access to the Internet to do their homework. Our businesses need the Internet to participate in the global economy and engage in the ever-growing world of e-commerce. Our healthcare providers need Internet access to serve patients with innovative telemedicine tools.

□ 1230

Our constituents simply can't compete in the 21st century economy that we live in without access to the Internet. It is really that simple.

Broadband deployment is especially important in our country's rural areas. Less than half—only 47 percent—of Americans living in rural areas have access to broadband. We as legislators need to do what we can to get these essential services to our constituents.

This bill is a commonsense, bipartisan measure, and I thank Congressman WALDEN for working with me on this bill that will help small Internet service providers throughout the country deploy broadband and serve our constituents.

In my home State of Iowa, we have 134—that is 134. We have 99 counties but 134 individual small ISPs. The smallest provider in our State is based in my district and serves only 100 subscribers.

As a whole, these companies serve a median of only 750 subscribers. I am proud of the work done by these small businesses that serve the families and businesses that live on farms or in small towns that otherwise might not have any options.

Small ISPs do not have the resources that the bigger guys do, and that is the important thing to remember with this bill. I support the FCC's enhanced transparency rules, and I think that it is important to make sure that consumers have the information they need to make informed decisions and to make sure they are protected. It is also important that we find a balance between providing consumers with technical information about their Internet and making sure that consumers have access in the first place.

I have heard from small businesses in my district that these rules as proposed by the FCC will pose a significant burden and consume critical resources, potentially limiting their ability to invest in broadband development. For example, they have told me they would have to buy special equipment to measure things like packet loss on their networks. These are companies that may have only one technician on staff, so you can imagine the burden.

To address these burdens, this bill would continue the FCC's exemption of small business from the enhanced transparency rules for 5 years. It also instructs the FCC to gather data to determine the impacts of these rules so that we can revisit this issue down the road. When we revisit the issue, we have the opportunity then to figure out the best way to implement these important consumer protections going forward.

This short-term exemption gives small ISPs some much-needed certainty, allowing them to focus their resources on broadband deployment and thus serving their consumers.

I am glad that Mr. WALDEN and I were able to work together on a bipartisan compromise, and I thank our respective staffs as well. They did a great job.

While the original bill would have permanently exempted companies from the FCC's rule, this bill sunsets after 5 years, giving companies time to comply and giving the FCC time to report back to Congress on the real impact of these rules on consumers.

The original bill would have also exempted companies with 500,000 subscribers and 1,500 employees. I and others on the subcommittee were concerned that this threshold was simply too high, and we were able to come to an agreement to exempt ISPs serving half that many subscribers.

So this bill before us will give the certainty that small ISPs need, and it will help us achieve what I think we are all working for here, which is both expanded broadband access and the consumer protections that are needed by our constituents.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he my consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA). He is a very capable and able vice chair of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology and a man from Ohio who has done incredible work on a whole range of these communications issues.

Mr. LATTA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4596, the Small Business Broadband Deployment Act. This legislation limits the regulatory burden on small Internet service providers, ISPs, serving rural America, just like in my area, and allows them to focus on improving services for consumers.

The Federal Communications Commission's 2015 Open Internet Order included enhanced transparency rules for ISPs, requiring disclosure of commercial terms for prices and other fees and a number of complicated performance metrics. The FCC recognized that the burden of compliance would fall disproportionately on smaller providers and offered regulatory relief by temporarily exempting ISPs with 100,000 subscribers or fewer.

Today's bipartisan action will extend the exemption to 5 years and expand the definition of small broadband providers to fewer than 250,000 subscribers. This commonsense proposal will help small and rural broadband providers across my district focus on investing in networks, deploying broadband, improving connectivity, and creating jobs.

I thank Chairmen UPTON and WALDEN, Ranking Member PALLONE, and Congressman LOEBSACK for working together on this bill. I am proud to support H.R. 4596 and believe it will protect vital small ISPs who serve all of our constituents.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, H.R. 4596, the Small Business Broadband Deployment Act. There has been a lot said about it, and anyone who tunes in, it is not as complicated as it sounds.

We know what the Internet represents. We know we want to expand broadband in our country. We know especially in the rural areas of our country that broadband and all that it represents has not reached everyone, and there are many small businesses that are working hard to bring broadband into the areas where people do not have access.

We also have some critical protections for the consumers of broadband, and we wanted to make sure that we could protect the consumer but also not burden the small businesses, and that is what this legislation represents.

I am pleased that the bill includes the 5-year sunset provision, which is going to provide the FCC more time to study whether or not the exemption should be made permanent and how a small ISP should be defined.

So, long story short, I think that this is a good bill. It represents a bipartisan effort, and I hope it works out the way the promises are being made about it.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time each side has remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oregon has 21½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Iowa has 24 minutes remaining.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the distinguished and very effective majority leader of the United States House of Representatives.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his work on this.

Mr. Speaker, government policy is stuck in the past. Regulators from 20th century agencies are trying to manage and control a 21st century world—and it isn't working.

The world is too complex and individual situations are too unique for a big, bulky government to try to apply standards to everyone. And every time government tries to micromanage the markets or the free exchange of ideas or the development of new technology, our country and our people fall behind. We lose out on new companies, new jobs, and new services.

So, in the House, we want to free innovators from Silicon Valley to Boston by removing the obstacles that hold us back. We want breakthrough technologies and positive disruption that ensures American leadership around the world and brings government itself into the 21st century. It is our innovation initiative.

Today, thanks to GREG WALDEN, we have the first bill from the innovation initiative on the floor, protecting the Internet for hundreds of thousands of users.

The Internet is arguably the most dynamic contributor to a growing economy and higher quality of life in the world. It delivers information and education, supports new businesses and workers, and increases our ability to communicate and experience the world.

But right now, small Internet service providers that bring Internet to homes and businesses in less populated parts of the United States worry that the Washington bureaucracy will swoop in and impose regulations on them, and this will create a compliance burden that could put them out of business.

These small providers don't have enough resources to navigate the bureaucratic maze and bring broadband to communities at the same time. If these small Internet service providers go under, it could leave many people with limited Internet access or no access at all.

The administration delayed these rules once, but that was only temporary. These small Internet providers need permanent relief so they can focus on doing the job of delivering Internet to the American people. So we are passing a bill today that lifts these regulations on small providers for good.

We need to take every opportunity we can to create the space for innovation to thrive in this country. That is the purpose of our innovation initiative, and that is how we can make a more prosperous America that works for everyone.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), who brings extensive experience in all of this realm, of both electric and communications, based on his vast background on this during his days on the Public Utility Commission in North Dakota. He has been a huge asset on our subcommittee.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WALDEN for yielding the time and for his important leadership.

I think it is worth noting, as I know Representative LOEBSACK and several of us from rural districts often get involved in issues like this, and I always like to remind people that Representative WALDEN's district is actually larger than the State of North Dakota. That is how rural we are. We all know Iowa is a rural State. I think this bill is a great representation of what happens when a coalition of rural States and districts get together and try to do the right thing for the people we work for. So it is a pleasure to be part of that.

I will be brief because the leadership has already outlined the essence of the bill very effectively. I will spend just a minute or 2 talking about the reality of the importance of this to a place like North Dakota and to places like rural Oregon or Iowa and other places where distance is greater than the population, where the advantages of access to something as dynamic as the Internet makes all the difference in the world for education opportunities, for health care accessibility, and, of course, for individual use.

That is a challenge in rural America that, frankly, many of our small Internet service providers and communication and technology companies have been meeting all along with plenty of things going against them, not the least of which is: much of the deployment of broadband in rural America has been done, even when it is not necessarily economically advantageous to do it at the time, so that the burdensome regulations, intended or unintended, that came from the FCC rule just don't apply to everybody.

I think that the standards that we have set in the negotiation that have created the benchmarks for access deployment are appropriate. And 250,000 consumers and the size of the companies, I think, hits just right that sweet spot, not only because it was negotiated and it has got consensus, but because I think it is the right number. I think they are the right numbers.

So we don't want to stifle innovation. We want to expand innovation, especially in something as dynamic as the Internet. This act does that. I am honored to be a part of it, and I am honored to be a member of the committee.

I thank the Representative ESHOO as well as Representative LOEBSACK and certainly Chairman WALDEN for their leadership.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, seeing no other speakers on our side of the aisle, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I thank Chairman WALDEN for working on this, once again. Thanks to our staffs, again, for working on this compromise.

There is just one last thing. I would like to remind folks that transparency is a good thing, and the FCC has good intentions when they talk about transparency and making sure that consumers understand what they are getting for their money. So, as far as I am concerned, we have to continue to provide that transparency, but we have to make sure that we do it in the way that we are doing it in this particular legislation, to have that balance that those ISPs, those small-sized ISPs, can continue to provide that access in the first place, as I mentioned already in my remarks.

□ 1245

I thank everyone who has worked on this. It is a great compromise. I wish that we could do this more often here in this body and over in the Senate. I am not such a Pollyanna to believe that this is the beginning of great things to happen, but I think we made real progress here.

I again thank Chairman WALDEN, Ranking Member ESHOO, and our staffs for working on this.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Again, I want to thank my colleague from Iowa who has been a great partner in finding the right sweet spot here as we move forward on more telecommunication policy that will help us allow these great innovators and inventors to go out and serve our constituents and offer competition in the marketplace and, not just because they are small, be snuffed out by a government that requires things they can't afford to do and takes money away from innovation.

They still have to, as you know, follow all of the laws and all of the protections and all of that. It is just this reporting requirement seemed pretty onerous. In fact, obviously, the FCC thought it was when they first came out with their rule. We concur with that and extend that exemption on out.

I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, I am really proud of the bipartisan work that Mr. LOEBSACK, myself, and others have done on our subcommittee.

This marks the fifth piece of legislation that we have brought to the House floor in this Congress in one capacity or another. We passed the FCC consolidated reporting legislation, Mr. Speaker, unanimously across this House floor.

This is designed to deal with the antiquated statutory requirements on reports that aren't needed, oftentimes aren't completed, and, yet, cost money to taxpayers and those who pay fees. So we have a consolidated report that is designed to simplify that process, save taxpayers money, and decrease

the Federal bureaucracy a bit. That is over in the Senate now, Mr. Speaker.

We passed FCC process reform legislation that we reached bipartisan agreement on as well. I think it passed unanimously through the House, Mr. Speaker.

This is really important because we are trying to shed a little light on the FCC's activities and bring fairness and transparency to the Federal Communications Commission so that the public, the consumers, the stakeholders, all have a better opportunity to see how policy that will affect them is being deliberated and considered or even what is proposed. That bill is over in the Senate.

Then we dealt with the issue of what we call the DOTCOM Act to make sure that, when the contract runs out on how the Internet naming agency and all works and all the IANA and ICANN pieces, that consumers are protected and will continue to have free Internet, free from government intrusion, free, as it has been, to innovate and create this enormous change. That passed the House I think with over 380 votes.

The Spectrum Pipeline legislation actually was part of the bipartisan budget agreement we passed at the end of last year. So that is now in law, as a matter of fact.

This marks, as I say, our fifth initiative to try to help this great sector of our economy continue to expand, that provides access to the world, and provides access to commerce and jobs in a rural setting.

I can't tell you how important this is in a district such as mine where people now can locate in a smaller community, in a rural environment, with a great lifestyle, connect into the Internet, and be able to conduct commerce and grow jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fine piece of legislation, represents really solid work, and is really important to a lot of start-up and small companies across our country that we need to help grow, expand, and be the next competitor and the next one to really move up and give all us consumers more competition and better service.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I ask Members on both sides of the aisle to join us in bipartisan support of this legislation, which, by the way, Mr. Speaker, is also supported by the administration.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, we have built a proud, bipartisan record of success, and this legislation will help our nation's small businesses which are the lifeblood of Michigan's economy, and the American economy as a whole. A quick look at the stats reveals small businesses represent 99.7 percent of all employers in the United States, and they are true job creators, consistently accounting for 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs in each of the past ten years.

Small Internet providers in particular serve a unique role in connecting consumers across the country. They provide service to rural constituents, to other small businesses, and to areas of the country that otherwise would lack any alternative. They often do so with very few resources, relying on a smaller number of employees to do a great deal of work. The bill that we will vote on today makes sure that they can continue to do so without being hampered by regulatory burdens and red tape.

The Small Business Broadband Deployment Act builds on the temporary steps taken by the Federal Communications Commission to exempt small providers from the enhanced transparency requirements adopted as part of the 2015 Open Internet Order. At the time, the Commission recognized that there could be a significant impact on smaller businesses, and rightfully exempted them from the requirements. However, the FCC's grant of a series of temporary exemptions does not give these businesses the certainty they need to make informed investment decisions.

H.R. 4596 is a bipartisan solution to this problem. By extending the exemption for five years, and raising the threshold for the definition at a small business, this legislation will protect small businesses and ultimately benefit consumers. Keeping these entrepreneurs focused on laying fiber, building towers, and improving service means a better Internet experience for their customers, and more jobs. This is what they set out to accomplish when they started their businesses—serving their communities, not spending hours or days complying with a maze of regulations and piles of paperwork.

Our committee spent a great deal of time considering this problem. In addition, the robust record at the FCC in support of the exemption confirmed our view that this extension was necessary. We heard directly from witnesses like the president of a small fixed wireless provider, a former FCC commissioner, and a public interest representative. Their input both on how important this bill is, and on how to improve our early draft bill, helped us to come to the final version we are considering today.

Subcommittee Chairman WALDEN and Representative LOEBSACK worked in a bipartisan way to come to a consensus on legislation that achieves all of our goals. The final product is a bill that we can all be proud to support, and I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense solution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. VEASEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part A of House Report 114–453.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 4, line 4, insert before the semicolon the following: '', including whether making such exception permanent would increase access to services provided by small businesses''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 640, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my amendment to H.R. 4596, which simply adds an additional component to the required report from the FCC.

My amendment requests the agency to also answer whether a permanent exemption from enhanced disclosure for small Internet providers, or ISPs, could increase access to the services offered by these small businesses. As many of you already know, these exemptions were created in the FCC's most recent update to the open Internet order.

As Congress considers modifying or making this exemption permanent, it is important to know the impact this would have for those people the order was intended to protect, in this case, the consumers.

Mr. Speaker, the real purpose of a permanent exemption should not be to just lighten the load for these businesses, but also to increase access to broadband services in general.

Even in urban areas, like the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex that I represent, there is still an alarming number of people without access to all broadband services. Congress must work to enact evidence-based policy to expand Internet access.

My amendment would simply have the FCC provide additional information regarding the effects of a permanent extension on a small ISP's consumer base.

However, after speaking with my colleagues, including the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK), I am confident that the goal of my amendment will be achieved through the bill itself.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment.

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I thank the gentleman for his participation in this process and debate. I look forward to working with him on these issues. I share his concern, and I appreciate his participation. As I say, the door is always open and happy to continue. We all want the same outcome here for our consumers.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I failed to include in the RECORD a letter of support for our underlying bill signed by the heads of the American Cable Association; CCA; CTIA; United States Telecom Association; WISPA, the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association; WTA, Advocates for Rural Broadband, the rural broadband coalition; and the National Cable & Telecommunications Association, so I would like to include that in the RECORD in support of this effort.

MARCH 15, 2016.

Hon. FRED UPTON,
Chairman, Committee on Energy & Commerce, Washington, DC.

Hon. FRANK PALLONE,
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy & Commerce, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN UPTON AND RANKING MEMBER PALLONE: We write to express our strong

support for H.R. 4596, the Small Business Broadband Deployment Act, which is scheduled to be considered by the full House of Representatives tomorrow.

We commend you, and Communications & Technology Subcommittee Chairman Walden and Representative Loebsack, for crafting a common-sense bill that provides small broadband providers with greater certainty than the Federal Communications Commission's temporary exemption from the enhanced transparency obligations adopted as part of the Open Internet Order. In multiple industry submissions to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), including filings regarding the Paperwork Reduction Act, small providers demonstrated that the enhanced requirements would impose time-consuming and costly compliance obligations; yet, the FCC only extended the existing temporary exemption for a limited time. After reviewing the record at the FCC and receiving testimony at its hearing on the legislation in January, the Communications & Technology Subcommittee found there was more than sufficient evidence to further expand and extend the exemption.

We are gratified that the Committee has produced a bipartisan bill that will enable small broadband providers to focus their financial and human resources on providing high-quality broadband service to their customers rather than dealing with new regulatory obligations. We urge support for H.R. 4596 and look forward to its approval tomorrow.

President and CEO of American Cable Association, President and CEO of CCA, President and CEO of CTIA, President and CEO of National Cable & Telecommunications Association, Chief Executive Officer of NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association, President and CEO of United States Telecom Association, Executive Vice President of WTA—Advocates for Rural Broadband, Legislative Committee Chair of WISPA.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman's amendment is withdrawn.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1302

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee) at 1 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Passage of H.R. 4596;

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 4416; and

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 4434.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

SMALL BUSINESS BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 4596) to ensure that small business providers of broadband Internet access service can devote resources to broadband deployment rather than compliance with cumbersome regulatory requirements, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 411, nays 0, not voting 22, as follows:

[Roll No. 124]

YEAS—411

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Graham
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Womack
Woodall

Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—22

Adams
Blackburn
Brooks (IN)
Burgess
Coffman
DesJarlais
Duckworth
Ellmers (NC)
Gosar
Granger
Graves (MO)
Harris
Higgins
Jackson Lee
LaMalfa
Lowey
Meeks
Rush
Scalise
Schweikert
Smith (WA)
Wittman

□ 1322

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ changed her vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 124, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye.''

Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 124, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes.''

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 124, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 124, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes.''

EXTENDING DEADLINE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT NUMBERED 12715

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4416) to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 418, nays 2, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 125]

YEAS—418

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—2

Amash
Watson Coleman

NOT VOTING—13

Adams
Blackburn
Brady (TX)
Butterfield
DesJarlais
Duckworth
Graves (MO)
Higgins
Jackson Lee
Rush
Scalise
Schweikert
Smith (WA)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1329

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXTENDING DEADLINE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT NUMBERED 13287

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4434) to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 417, nays 2, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 126]

YEAS—417

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole

Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—2

Amash
Watson Coleman

NOT VOTING—14

Adams
Blackburn
Cicilline
DesJarlais
Duckworth
Graves (MO)
Higgins
Jackson Lee
Norcross
Nugent
Rush
Scalise
Schweikert
Smith (WA)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1335

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, on March 16, 2016, I was unavoidably detained due to a family member's health emergency. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On rollcall No. 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 123, 124, 125, and 126, I would have voted "yes."

On rollcall No. 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, I would have voted "no."

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S VISIT TO CUBA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, President Obama's trip to Cuba is ill-conceived and premature. A fun trip, the President labeled it. The visit comes on the heels of declarations by the Communist Party that it will ''not give up a single inch in the defense of revolutionary and anti-imperialist ideals.''

Harrumph. This translates to over 2,555 arbitrary detentions of peaceful protesters between January and February of 2016 alone and over 8,000 arrests just last year.

The President's meeting with civil society is such a low benchmark, the official Cuban newspaper, Granma, stated that Obama's visit destroys the myth that Cuba violates human rights. The leader of the free world has chosen a legacy-shopping photo op enjoying a baseball game with a murderer and a thug.

In these critical moments for democracy on the island, we must support peaceful demonstrations like the one scheduled in south Florida at 11 a.m. on Sunday in front of the Bay of Pigs monument on 8th Street.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

It will be led by Assembly of the Cuban Resistance from Exile, Forum for Democracy and Freedom in Cuba, and Organization for Foundation for the Judicial Rescue.

It will be led by La Asamblea de la Resistencia Cubana desde el exilio, el Foro por los Derechos y Libertades desde Cuba, y la organización Fundación Rescate Jurídico.

The exile community in Miami, who has welcomed many of Castro's former political prisoners, is painfully aware of the trampling of human rights still going on today. This is not a fun trip for peaceful dissidents.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida will provide the Clerk a translation of her remarks.

IT IS TIME TO INVEST IN AMERICA

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today Washington, D.C., was a little bit more of a mess than usual. The Metro is shut down. In part, it is a consequence of mismanagement for years; but more importantly, it is a statement about the deteriorated state of transit in America. There is an $80 billion—B, billion—backlog of capital needed to bring existing transit—not new transit options to get people out of their cars and out of traffic and mitigate congestion—just to bring existing transit systems up to a state of good repair.

As I have been talking about this around the country for the last couple of years, I have been saying, you know, things are so bad that they are killing people in Washington, D.C., and that is what has been happening. It has deteriorated to the point where we had one accident that killed six people and a fire last year that killed one person.

We need to make these repairs. We need them made in America. We have the strongest Buy America requirements for transit of any part of the Federal Government. It will provide American jobs. It will give Americans better commuting opportunities. It will make our people safe on transit.

But this body has failed to bring forward or even allow a vote on additional

funding for transportation infrastructure in this country. It is a crisis. We are becoming third or maybe fourth world in our infrastructure. Bridges are falling down, potholes, and transit systems that are falling apart; it is time to invest in America.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FAILURES

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Veterans Administration failed to contact thousands of veterans who submitted applications for health care. Apparently, those applications were incomplete, but the VA did not tell the vets to correct the applications and resubmit them; so the applications were left pending on a shelf with no action by the VA and no health care for the veterans. Reports state that nearly 300,000 veterans died waiting for a resolution from the VA.

Of course, the VA blamed the veterans. This is a farce. The veterans never even received a follow-up call to finish their supposedly incomplete applications.

These mistakes are that of the VA, not the veterans. The VA should be ashamed. Government bungling stood in the way of these warriors receiving health care and broke a promise the Nation gave to them.

The VA's dysfunctional bureaucrats need to be removed, and veterans should be allowed to have a voucher that gives them the privilege to go to their own doctors, doctors who are more concerned about health care than paperwork.

And that is just the way it is.

REMEMBERING MARTIN OLAV SABO

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well of the floor today to pay homage and honor to a great Minnesotan and a Member of this body, Martin Olav Sabo. He was the Congressperson who preceded me to represent the Fifth Congressional District.

I can say without any reservation that very, very few people can boast to be greater public servants than Martin Sabo in my State of Minnesota or in America.

Martin Sabo served for more than 40 years in public life, 28 years in Congress. He was the chair of the Committee on the Budget, and he was also a good friend to all. I will say that he was always gracious and well-mannered. He was a helpful person, and he was available to mentor literally hundreds of Minnesota politicians, public activists, and servants.

It is with a heavy heart that I give these remarks because, of course, it would be wonderful to have all of our friends, including Martin Sabo, be with us for a long, long time; but, of course, every one of us does leave this world, and when they do, they would be very, very lucky to make the mark that Martin Sabo did—a great man, a great Minnesotan.

□ 1345

CHANGE NEEDED AT WMATA

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

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, our Metro system, informed us that they would be suspending operations all day today and into tonight.

While I appreciate that the new general manager had to make this decision to keep our riders safe, what this does is highlight many more widespread problems throughout the system that have been present for years that we need to address. We know a culture change in management needs to happen.

When our delegation met with the new manager at the end of last year, we told him we needed to have a management change and that we needed to see some action taken quickly. I am appreciative the Transportation chairman is going to have hearings on this.

I want to read to you an example of why we need changes here. A trainee at Metro talked about the incompetence there. He said:

> I'll be honest with you. I studied harder for fast-food jobs and waiter jobs when I was in college than I did for their training program at Metro. Their testing program is a joke.

This is from a Washingtonian article in December of last year.

WMATA and Metro lifers who haven't left for years need to start leaving so that we can have a new management culture there.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleagues for a Special Order about Women's History Month.

This month of March we are blessed with the opportunity to discuss the opportunities particularly presented by the Republican Party and the philosophies of the Republican Party as they relate to women, women's history and women's future and the opportunity to be involved in building women up and providing opportunities in the future, an opportunity culture that is shared by men and women to make sure that our homeland is safe and secure, to make sure that our families are in an environment that will be uplifting. These are some of the topics we will be discussing today.

I am joined by several colleagues, one of whom I would like to call on first. Incidentally, the first colleague I am calling on is a Republican man with whom I graduated from law school as a student at the University of Wyoming College of Law.

My own home State of Wyoming is the first government in the world to continuously grant women the right to vote. That occurred in 1869. Colorado, the home State of this gentleman, is the first State to grant women the right to vote.

I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK).

Mr. BUCK. I thank the gentlewoman from Wyoming, my friend and law school classmate, for her great leadership on this issue.

I am proud to come from a State that was not only the first to give women the right to vote, but the first to elect women to the State legislature. My wife Perry is continuing that great tradition as a member of the Colorado General Assembly.

Many women have impacted our neighborhoods, our communities, and our Nation. But I want to speak briefly today about the many women who will impact our world.

They have ideas and ambitions and callings. They have machines to invent, deals to negotiate, people to heal, diseases to cure, and legislation to pass.

Republicans are advancing an agenda to help these women impact our future. We are focused on making the country more secure, on creating jobs, on replacing ObamaCare with a patient-centered alternative, on extending opportunity to all children, and on protecting the freedom at the heart of our prosperity.

Women don't need government getting in their way. That is why the efforts of Congress to reassert its authority and roll back executive overreach are so vital.

Congress has the responsibility to create an environment where women thrive. In 100 years, I hope we are celebrating the women who made this country great, not lamenting the government that stopped them.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank the gentleman for being here today and acknowledging the importance of Women's History Month and the involvement of women in politics and government and for his leadership in his home State of Colorado.

Next I would like to yield to a longstanding colleague who is well known

to the House of Representatives. VIRGINIA FOXX has done more on workforce development issues in the last couple of years than have been done in many, many years in the House of Representatives.

She is the first in her family to graduate from college, earn a master's and doctorate degree, and then went on to be the president of an institute of higher learning, a community college.

Her presidency there also lifted education in her home State. She is the chairwoman of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina's Fifth District (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman LUMMIS for her leadership in this Special Order this afternoon and for all the great work that she has done.

She is a wonderful role model for women. She has lent her expertise as the former treasurer of her State, and has brought much, much talent to the House of Representatives. I appreciate all that she has done since she has been here.

We all know, I think, that March is Women's History Month, which honors and celebrates the struggles and achievements of American women throughout the history of the United States.

Since 1917, when Republican Jeannette Rankin of Montana became the first woman to serve in Congress, 313 women have served as U.S. Representatives, Senators, or Delegates.

Many Americans might assume that their congressional Representatives come from exclusive and rarified backgrounds. Well, my story could hardly be less rarified.

As a child, my family's home didn't have electricity or running water. My parents, while dedicated and hardworking, were very poor, with little formal education. Girls with my background weren't likely to end up in Congress.

Fortunately, I was pushed by the right people, teachers and administrators who wouldn't let me settle for less than my best.

In the mountains of North Carolina, I learned firsthand the power of education and its vital role in the success of every American. Although it took me 7 years while working full-time, I became the first in my family to go to college and earn a degree.

In the 1970s, I was a member of the League of Women Voters. Through the League, I attended school board meetings in my county as a public observer to encourage accountability of elected officials. I went to countless meetings, many times as the only person representing the general public.

During one meeting of an all-male school board, a local reporter leaned over and said: These guys are incompetent. Why don't you run for the school board?

My instinctive response was: I am not qualified.

I think many women fall prey to this attitude of self-disqualification and underestimate their abilities. I took another look at those board members and changed my mind.

Eventually, I ran for the school board. While I lost that first race, I won the next election for school board, and I haven't lost an election since.

So while I may not have had wealthy parents or an Ivy League education, I did have what every single American has: opportunity.

A few weeks ago I spoke to a local Girl Scout troop about Congress and its role in our government. As the group was leaving my office, one of the parents pulled me aside and said how glad she was that the girls had the opportunity to hear from a woman in my position.

Women are a stronger presence than ever before on Capitol Hill. We have rich and varied perspectives and a commitment to good ideas and teamwork. The women of the 114th Congress are shaping our Nation, and it is an opportunity and responsibility that we take seriously.

Although I am now serving in my sixth term as a Representative from North Carolina, I am still really a teacher at heart, having spent the lion's share of my life working as an educator and administrator in North Carolina colleges and universities.

I believe confronting the challenges facing American schools and workplaces is critical to providing opportunity for every individual to get ahead.

That is why, as chairwoman of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training, I have led efforts to modernize and reform the Nation's workforce development system. I appreciate very much my colleague mentioning that.

In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into law. This bipartisan, bicameral compromise between the SKILLS Act that I authored and the Senate's Workforce Investment Act of 2013 streamlines and improves existing Federal workforce development programs and fosters a modern workforce that American businesses can rely on to compete.

House Republicans have also fought to limit one-size-fits-all Federal dictates that hamper innovation and limit the ability of States and local schools to address their students' needs.

Last fall we passed the Every Student Succeeds Act, which reverses Washington's micromanagement of classrooms and gives parents, teachers, and local education leaders the tools they need to repair a broken system and help all children reach their potential.

Unfortunately, many Americans still struggle to realize the dream of higher education because our current system is often expensive, inflexible, and outdated. Too many students are unable to complete college, saddled with loan debt and ill-equipped to compete in our modern economy.

The United States is the world's summit of opportunity, and we have a responsibility to act now to preserve that role. House Republicans are pursuing reforms that will help all individuals, regardless of age, location, or background, access and complete higher education, if they choose.

We are working to empower students and families to make informed decisions. We want to simplify and improve student aid as well as promote innovation access and completion. We are committed to ensuring strong accountability and a limited Federal role.

By keeping college within reach for students and preserving the excellence in diversity that has always set America's colleges and universities apart, our country and our economy stand to benefit.

While Women's History Month celebrates the incredible accomplishments of women throughout America's history, the most lasting tribute we can pay is our efforts to improve this Nation for the next generation of women.

Rather than simply being discouraged by the many problems facing our country and our world, I have learned to be an agent of change focused on the problems that can be solved and the people who can be helped.

I thank my friend who encouraged me back in the 1970s to run for the school board because of the opportunities it has provided me to help other people throughout my life.

Mrs. LUMMIS. We are tackling five big priorities that women care about this year: national security, jobs, health care, upward mobility, and balance of power.

You just heard from Congresswoman FOXX about jobs, about education, and upward mobility that comes through those avenues.

The other areas we are talking about include national security and health care. No one in Congress is better prepared to address those issues than our next speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the first woman to represent the Second District of North Carolina, which includes all of Fort Bragg, home of the airborne and Special Operations Forces.

She has served on the House Energy and Commerce Committee since 2012 and currently serves as chairman of the Republican Women's Policy Committee.

Prior to running for office, she worked as a registered nurse for over 21 years and owned a general surgery practice with her husband Brent in Dunn, North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS), someone with real life experience in the areas of health care and who represents a district that is so profoundly influential in this Nation's national security.

□ 1400

Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina. I thank my friend and colleague from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS). I just want to say how much I appreciate her leadership, especially today, as we are talking about Women's History Month and the different roles that we, as women in Congress, are playing, and how we want to formulate and build the structure into the future for all women. I thank her for her service to all of us in representing Wyoming.

Mr. Speaker, this month is Women's History Month. It is an opportunity to highlight the various ways women in America are pushing the envelope to leave a positive and lasting imprint on society.

As the first woman to represent North Carolina's Second District, and the first woman in our State to represent Fort Bragg, national security remains one of my utmost priorities.

So when I learned of a proposal to deactivate the 440th Airlift Wing located at Pope Army Airfield in Fort Bragg, I rallied my North Carolina colleagues. For nearly 2 years, we went toe-to-toe with the Air Force on this misguided decision.

The 440th is known for its ability to rapidly mobilize and execute last-minute exercises. It is unique in its mission and provides unparalleled levels of training to paratroopers of the 18th Airborne Corps.

Deactivation of the Airlift Wing would undoubtedly affect our military readiness and it could jeopardize the safety of our paratroopers. Given the global uncertainty abroad right now, this decision just doesn't make sense.

To fight this ill-conceived decision, I coordinated with my North Carolina colleagues to question top military leaders here at the Capitol. During these same meetings, we sought answers to tough questions and asked for data to back up their justification for the Wing's closure.

As a woman representing the military base, I have remained unwavering in my work to acquire answers. I have asked for meetings with the Air Force Reserve, the Army, the Pentagon, members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and local Fort Bragg commanders.

The threat of terrorism abroad and the growth of radical groups like ISIS makes the decision to deactivate even more baffling. Constituents back home in North Carolina feel the same way, so I have charged forward in my efforts to prevent its closure.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to reiterate that the Republican women in Congress are making history in a variety of ways. As women, we are working to create new opportunities, restore a confident America, and ensure the safety and security of every family living in our country.

Again I thank my good friend, Congresswoman LUMMIS, for hosting today's Special Order, for being the person that she is, representing Wyoming, being a leader amongst all of us, as women in Congress, and allowing us to speak about the individual initiatives that we are tackling as women.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank the gentlewoman and acknowledge her expertise on health care, and want to raise an issue that I would love to hear her comments on.

One of the bills that I am cosponsoring is a bill called the Research for All Act, and it would acknowledge that most medical research focuses on men, and studying women is suggested, but not required.

Now, sometimes different drugs have different effects on women than they do on men, and vice versa. For example, there is a diabetes drug study that shows that their drug may lower women's risk of heart failure, but increase a man's; and unless we have adequate studies done on both men and women, we won't recognize those differences or nuances in treatment options that should be tailored differently to men and women.

Based on your experience in nursing, your lifelong career there, do you have any comments about other healthcare initiatives that women are working on here in Congress?

Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina. First of all, I thank the gentlewoman for her piece of legislation on that particular issue because it shows the importance and how incredibly accurate you are when you are saying that there are so many differences in treatments geared towards women and geared towards men.

When you highlight heart conditions, that is the number one killer of women in this country, when we look at disease. Heart disease is the number one. When we look at this, we know that women respond differently to symptoms of heart disease than men do, and so do the drugs. So that is a perfect example of why we have to be focusing from a perspective where we consider both genders.

There are so many things that are being worked on here in Washington by the women leaders that we have. For instance, some of the things that we have been able to pass on a large bipartisan scale have to do with breast cancer.

The USPSTF came out with a decision saying that women between the ages 40–49 don't necessarily have to have mammograms, and so, therefore, their insurance companies shouldn't have to pay for it.

I worked across the aisle on legislation to stop that from moving forward, and we were able to put a 2-year moratorium on that decision so that we can actually bring a consensus together.

The last thing we want to do for women in this country is send out more mixed messages on breast cancer and the treatment of and the prevention of. So we are working with our colleagues, as Republicans and Democrats.

Another perfect example of a healthcare decision that is being made by the USPSTF right now is essentially interrupting the process for men to get a PSA test, which is the only way we can diagnose prostate cancer. It is a simple blood test, and right now they are making decisions as to whether or not insurance companies should have to pay for that. I think that is devastating.

And then, of course, I will just say, Medicare remains one of the major issues that we are working on. I will tell you that all of the women in the Republican conference are dedicated to this effort.

There are some new rule changes that are coming out from CMS now that we are all targeting, and we have got to do that for every senior in this country who is receiving Medicare. They need the health care that they deserve, and we have got to do everything we can to make sure that it is accessible to them.

But, obviously, the largest—the elephant in the room, if you will, is, of course, the Affordable Care Act, and we continue to be dedicated to this issue.

In North Carolina, I can tell you it is a mess with the insurance plans. The individual plans themselves have skyrocketed from 30 to 40 to 50 percent increase in premiums, with an equal increase on the deductible.

The out-of-pocket costs that families in North Carolina now are spending is outrageous. They are literally making decisions to not go to the doctor when they need health care because they don't want to have to pay extra.

This is unacceptable. It certainly was not the intention of the Affordable Care Act.

As you know, my dear colleague, we have had many of the solutions to this problem, and I believe that the women in our conference are going to lead and be a strong voice to our leadership for us to move forward so that we can show the American people that we have alternatives to the Affordable Care Act that will continue to give them good coverage, but also continue to support good health care.

The 21st Century Cures Act we passed in 2015 is another perfect example of all of us coming together to ensure the American people get the coverage, the cures.

What better way to save dollars in health care than to come up with cures?

If we could just find one on Alzheimer's alone, we would save incredible amounts of money.

Listen, I am just proud and honored to be able to have a voice, especially when it comes to health care because, as we know, health care touches every life, and we have to do everything as Members of Congress, as mothers, as sisters, to do everything we can for the American people.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Alzheimer's, which you mentioned, is a disease where two-thirds of the patients are women, which also means that men are 50 percent less likely to get it. So the importance of having women making policy

on these issues is very high because we are the ones who are dealing with frequently female relatives, be they mothers, sisters, aunts, who are suffering from Alzheimer's.

When we have people like Congresswoman ELLMERS, who has a nursing background, a medical professional background, we have the opportunity to use that expertise that she has gained in her prior career, in her capacity as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, where much of the healthcare-related legislation originates in this Congress.

In addition, our new Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN, has put together several idea-gathering groups to make sure that we are building an agenda for the next Congress that will address these issues that have festered during the last 8 years; among them, the unacceptable consequences of ObamaCare that have created the situations which you described in your home State.

Can you give us a sneak preview about what some of these idea meetings are bringing to light about the direction of healthcare policy, as crafted by the Republican Party, about your role in those idea sessions, and how we intend to roll out health care that truly is affordable?

Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina. Well, I will just say that I have had the honor of being part of the Republican Study Committee group that has worked on alternatives to the Affordable Care Act, and we have come up with about 10 or 12 different issue-based sections that are good policy that really have been there for a while, that many of our members have had; and we have actually culminated it into a plan of action that would take care of the issue and cover those things that the Affordable Care Act is leaving the American people behind.

One of the issues is choice, being able to choose a plan for your family that you feel is appropriate. Unfortunately, the Affordable Care Act, it was promoted as something that provided incredible choice. You were going to be able to go to your doctor. You were going to be able to go to the hospital you wanted. It was going to bring down the cost. And none of those things have come to be true. So now we have to go in and we have to change that.

You should be able to buy insurance across State lines or from a different perspective rather than what you have within your own State. You should be able to have a healthcare savings plan where you can put dollars away and be responsible for yourself.

Young people are in a different situation. They shouldn't have to spend hundreds and hundreds of dollars every month on a healthcare plan that they cannot afford when they can have a much more economical issue there, another situation that they can deal with.

Another big issue is tort reform at the national level. I think this is something that will also save dollars. There are many, many ideas from the business side of it, with small businesses to larger businesses having better choices, being able to negotiate healthcare plans.

So when we are talking about health care and we are talking about the affordable care, what we really are talking about is healthcare coverage. And I think that is one of the most important parts of this discussion that many times, I think, gets confused.

We are talking about healthcare coverage, which leads to better health care. We should be doing everything we can to make sure that it is accessible to every American, and to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves.

Pre-existing conditions is a huge issue. We have to be able to deal with that. We know that we cannot leave the American people hanging. In other words, when we talk about wanting to repeal it, we know that there has to be a process in place to make sure that there is a safety net for all of those families who have been forced off of their insurance plans and on to an affordable care plan that was not their choice, only they were forced to do it because it became law.

Now we have to make sure that we are providing an option for them, one that will move them from one place to another, a much better place.

I will just say again that we are dedicated to this issue. It is the main reason I ran for Congress to begin with. I will not let up on this until we actually have the solutions that we are looking for.

□ 1415

I am looking forward to our working together over this next year on this issue and just moving health care forward in so many different ways. Unfortunately, the Federal Government does have a lot to do with what is working and what is not working, and I am just very happy to be part of that conversation.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank our colleague for her dedication and commitment to health care for Americans that will truly work for them.

Speaking of which, and in recognition of a wonderful woman who is an example of the types of healthcare issues that we are addressing this afternoon as part of our focus on Women's History Month, we have been joined by the good gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SALMON), who would like to pay tribute to a woman from his great State of Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona, Congressman MATT SALMON.

Mr. SALMON. First, before I start honoring this wonderful woman, I would like to say that I learned early in my life, in my church, that if you want to talk about something, you convene a meeting with a bunch of men; if you want to solve something, you convene a meeting with women.

Mrs. LUMMIS. My former Senator, Alan Simpson, used to say: ''The cock croweth, but the hen delivereth the goods.''

Mr. SALMON. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak very, very lovingly and admiringly about one of the most wonderful people I have ever gotten a chance to know in my life. Her name is Laura Knaperek.

I first met Laura when I was a State legislator. I was assigned to be on the health committee, and Laura was a citizen activist that came down to champion the cause of families, and specifically families with children with developmental disabilities. I was amazed then at her passion, and I remember telling her: You ought to run for office some day.

She was a beloved member of the Arizona community and a tireless champion for those with developmental disabilities and one of the strongest advocates for families I have ever met in my life. She sought to lift people's lives around her.

She was first elected to the State legislature in 1994. She set herself apart as a selfless public servant. A few weeks ago, our Speaker, in talking to the Conference, mentioned that there are two types of people in politics: there are doers, and there are be-ers. Laura Knaperek was a doer. She was not interested in having the title of being a State legislator; she was interested in solving the problems of the day.

She was diagnosed, in 2012, with ovarian cancer. I remember seeing her shortly after that diagnosis, and there was no despair and no concern. Without missing a beat, she just wanted to talk about how she could uplift other people's lives.

I remember Laura decided to champion an idea in Arizona, which I believe is an idea whose time has come. It is the right called the Right to Try. I think it was one of the very first States in the country that has tried to pass this by referendum. Laura was successful in doing this.

It basically allows individuals with terminal diseases access to things that aren't necessarily approved by the FDA yet. If it is their last-ditch chance, they ought to have a shot at life, and that was Laura's contention. She championed this idea, and it passed overwhelmingly at the ballot.

I am sad to say that, 4 years after her diagnosis, she succumbed to this dread disease.

I was shocked because Laura was on Facebook and every other social media outlet constantly championing ideas and thoughts of others, and she never said anything about herself. She never wallowed in self-pity. She was the kind of person that realized that the greatest service that we can do is serving other people.

In my church, there is a saying that, when you are in the service of your fellow being, you are in the service of God. I think Laura understood that better than anybody.

Because of Laura, I introduced H.R. 3012, the Right to Try Act, introduced the last session of Congress. I think that Americans deserve the same opportunity that Arizonans have to be able to try to save their life and do whatever is necessary to save their life if they are terminally ill and they have no other options, no hope.

I think that we can honor Laura and others like her by allowing everybody across the United States who suffers from a terminal illness the access to every tool available to help them fight for their precious life. The Right to Try, to me, is, in reality, a component of the God-given right to life. The Right to Try offers hope to those who have nowhere else to turn.

Laura Knaperek passed away at the age of 60, leaving behind her husband, Robert, their 6 children, 19 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild.

I ask my colleagues to join with me today in honoring Laura's life and pray that we continue Laura's fight to allow those with terminal illnesses another chance at life.

I thank the gentlewoman.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank the gentleman for that warm tribute to a woman who selflessly provided an option that women and men can use in the event that they are terminally ill where a possible drug treatment or other type of treatment has been identified that has not yet cleared the FDA drug analysis and has not yet been approved but may be tremendously helpful to preserving these lives that will be otherwise cut short so early, especially a woman of Laura's caliber, who, at 60 years of age, died, leaving such a wonderful family.

I thank the gentleman for sponsoring the legislation giving people the same opportunities that Arizonans have.

Have you reintroduced that piece of legislation in this Congress?

Mr. SALMON. Actually, we are going to be reintroducing it, and we are probably going to rename it Laura's Law in honor of Laura Knaperek.

There are very few times in your life that you meet somebody that you think they got the memo mixed up in Heaven, that God sent a memo that said that this person that is supposed to be an angel actually got to come down to Earth. That was Laura. She was an angel, a living angel, and somebody that gave a lot of people reason for hope through the course of her life, and she never, ever sought recognition. All she sought was helping others and changing other people's lives.

Do you know what? That is the standard I think we all aspire to, but there are rare occasions where we find somebody that just embodies everything that is good.

Mrs. LUMMIS. As we celebrate Women's History Month, we look for that junction between women who have done historic things, women such as Laura, and the way that they have paved the way for policies that can be implemented that provide opportunities for people that are in a similar condition as hers to have some hope and a chance at a longer life.

We are grateful that Congressman SALMON has been willing to pick up the torch of her good work and bring it to the attention of, and hopefully the approval of, this Congress.

I thank the gentleman for his role in this Congress, for acknowledging the importance of Laura's life for today's Special Order on Women's History Month, and for carrying on her fine work in his capacity as a fine gentleman who is doing the best to represent his State, and in doing so, enhances the opportunity for every American in this Nation. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. SALMON. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. LUMMIS. I yield to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. SALMON. I do want to say one other thing.

I know that the gentlewoman is going to be retiring after the end of this term, and I just want to say what a true honor it has been to serve with a statesman such as yourself. You are truly one of the bright spots in this place.

There have been a lot of times when I feel like I kind of had to kick myself extra hard to get motivated to come back and get on that plane and come to Washington, D.C., and leave my family behind; but there are people that give me hope, and you are one of those people. You will be sorely missed. It doesn't matter whether you are a woman or not a woman. You happen to be. You are a fine, fine individual, and I am proud to know you.

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank the gentleman. It is an honor to serve with you.

I know you are completing your second tour of duty in this Congress as well and will be returning to a lovely family in Arizona. Those of us who are from the West are blessed to live in beautiful places with people that create a society that matches the scenery, and you are an important part of that society.

Clearly, Laura was an important part of that society. She enhanced your life; and you, in turn, enhance ours.

I thank the gentleman from Arizona for his service.

Here, in Women's History Month, I can't help but toot the horn of my great State of Wyoming, the first government in the world to grant women the right to vote. We also had the first woman Governor, the first woman justice of the peace, the first woman grand juror, the first women who were elected delegates to the Republican and Democratic National Conventions, and the first woman elected official in the country, who happened to be the State superintendent of public instruction, Estelle Reel.

All of these women were trailblazers. This all happened 50 years before the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granted all American women the right to vote.

Wyoming territory, in 1869, became the first government in the world to continuously grant women the right to vote, and it has been my privilege as a woman from the great State of Wyoming to follow a woman colleague, Congresswoman Barbara Cubin, who served 14 years in this body. I now, in my eighth term, make a combined total of 22 consecutive years where our beloved State of Wyoming has been represented in this House of Representatives by women. And that is really saying something, since Wyoming only has one Member of Congress. It is, indeed, a great honor.

These women, however, we cannot just celebrate their past, our past, and the opportunities that we enjoy in this great Nation. We have to use what we have learned as American women to enhance the lives of our fellow Americans as we serve here, which is one of the reasons that we are both celebrating Women's History Month and discussing specifically, today, what the Republican Party is doing.

Women's History Month is our opportunity to celebrate the incredible accomplishments women have made to America. But the most lasting tribute we can pay this month is our effort to make history for the next generation of women. That is why House Republicans are building an agenda to restore a confident America where every American feels secure in their lives and their futures.

The five big priorities that women care about that we are working on together this year include: national security, which was discussed by RENEE ELLMERS; jobs, which was discussed, of course, by VIRGINIA FOXX; health care, where we have several nurses and medical practitioners that are women that are deeply involved in this legislative project; and upward mobility, something that is important to all Americans, but especially women.

When you consider how many women heads of household there are; when you consider that a rising tide lifts all boats, and when women earn more money, families do better, children do better, women do better, and men do better, it is very important, when we are talking about upward mobility, that opportunities are provided for women by having a Tax Code that does not burden them and by having jobs that come back to this country that have previously left this country.

We can do that by changing our Tax Code in a way that allows us to bring jobs back to this country so those employers and their employees are not penalized by higher taxes that we have through a Tax Code that makes sure that corporations pay more taxes here than they do in other countries. That is why we have what are called inversions. That is why people are leaving this country to take their jobs to other countries. We need to bring them back, providing more opportunities to have

great jobs here in this country for women, heads of household, and for all members of our society and culture.

With women making the majority of healthcare decisions in this country, we need to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act with an act that will provide opportunities for a marketplace for insurance that acknowledges that some people have preexisting conditions and you will not be penalized for such, that acknowledges that some people just want catastrophic coverage and later in their life can move into a system that maybe provides more specific coverage, and that allows you to shop for insurance across State lines. You can find a product that works specifically for you and that has a pool of participants large enough so that a very small population State like mine can be involved in a bigger pool, thereby bringing down the risk and bringing down the costs for those of us in very small States.

□ 1430

We have to be looking also at specific healthcare issues. Multiple sclerosis is much more prevalent in the Intermountain West than it is in a lot of other areas.

Research being done right now at Cornell University is showing that there is a possible connection between multiple sclerosis and a fungus in the soils.

These are the kinds of unusual connections when research is done that will allow us to address certain healthcare issues that may be more prevalent in one region than another, a healthcare system that is flexible and affordable and recognizes that not all healthcare issues are the same for men or women, for the Intermountain West versus the coastal States, for the African American population, for the Hispanic American population, for the White population.

These are all things that need to be discussed in the context of an affordable healthcare system that recognizes the tremendous scientific advantages that we enjoy by virtue of having a first-class higher education system.

We have to make sure that that higher education system continues to advance opportunities for all people that can contribute to the body of knowledge that have made America the greatest country in the world.

Women currently making up the largest component of the higher education population will be leading the way among them.

Mr. Speaker, before I wrap up this Special Order that has acknowledged women's history in this country and acknowledges the work that is being done here in Congress to make sure the future for American women is brighter, better, more prosperous, and more fulfilling than ever, I yield to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), a champion of healthcare revision that will benefit both men and women.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Wyoming for yielding to me on this important topic. I am privileged to be here on the floor listening to this discussion that we have today.

I think of the many, many hours that roll back as far back as 2009, when the healthcare debate began to get intensified here in this Congress. From the beginning, for me, it was about freedom.

I often say to people that the most sovereign thing that we have is our soul. We are in charge of that. We are in control of that. With God's help, we are in the management of our own soul. The Federal Government hasn't figured out how to tax it, how to nationalize it, or how to manage it.

That may be a point of profundity, but what is the second most sovereign thing that we have, aside from our soul? Number two is our skin and everything inside it, our bodies.

The Federal Government has figured out under ObamaCare how to nationalize that, how to do—I call it a hostile takeover of our skin and everything inside it—and tell us: We are going to tax your paycheck and we are going to command you to take that money and pay a health insurance premium, not the policy of your choice, but the policy of Uncle Sam's choice.

Then that policy, the rules written within it and the thousands of pages of rules that have been written on ObamaCare since, will determine whether you get health care or at least whether you get it paid for out of your health insurance policy or not. That I call a hostile takeover of my skin and everything inside it.

It is abhorrent to me for a free people to be subjugated to such a law. Yet, the other side of this is that we have had elections in 2010, 2012, 2014, and now an election coming up in 2016.

The results of this upcoming election might be the one where we finally set the full 100 percent ''rip it out by the roots as if it had never been enacted'' ObamaCare.

''Repeal it completely and entirely as if it had never been enacted'' actually are the last words of the repeal bill that I wrote in the middle of the night after it passed here on March 22, 2010, a sleepless night, I might add.

The question was: What is the other side of the glorious repeal of ObamaCare? A number of really good things that we would have done by now if it weren't obstructed by the policy that exists in front of us that is named after our President.

The first and I think most important one is to provide for selling insurance across State lines. There is legislation there that has existed for years called the McCarran-Ferguson Act.

It is legislation that enables the States to write the mandates and the specifications in such a way that the States can be lobbied by large health insurance companies whose goal is to have a monopoly within each of those States.

That is trade protectionism that is allowed. It is in violation of the Commerce Clause in the Constitution, I might add. But the McCarran-Ferguson Act enables that.

We need to repeal the components of the McCarran-Ferguson Act so that a young man, while at the beginning of this dialogue in 2009 or 2010—a 23-year-old young man would be paying about $6,000 a year for a typical health insurance policy in New Jersey, but a young man, same age, similarly situated in Kentucky, would be paying about $1,000 a year.

This would let the young man from New Jersey buy the policy from Kentucky, which, eventually, the competition would bring the price down in New Jersey, probably wouldn't bring it up in Kentucky, and we would see that the opportunities we would have as Americans we could trade for health insurance in any State.

Free trade zones on health insurance, what a wonderful thing. Then the Federal mandates would be gone. They would be away.

That would mean that especially young people that could wisely manage their investments would be able to buy a health savings account. The way they were set up in 2003, a couple at age 20 could have invested $5,150 a year. That was the max-out in an HSA.

If they spent about $2,000 a year for normal medical costs and accrued the balance of that at the 40-year average of interest rate, they would arrive at 65 Medicare eligibility with approximately $950,000 in their health savings account.

Uncle Sam's interest in that HSA at that point, that nearly $1 million, would be to tax it as real income when it comes out of the HSA.

Well, I would say instead, if you could buy a Medicare replacement policy in the dollars, when we did the math on this, for the couple for $144,000, the government would tax the balance. I would say keep the change tax free.

If you take yourself off of the Medicare rolls, the entitlement rolls, by buying a replacement annuitized, paid-up-for-life policy to replace the Medicare liability, keep the change tax free, say, $150,000, around $800,000 tax free, that becomes your retirement account.

The HSA has become now a life management account where you would be planning your health insurance. The more money you had in your HSA, the more deductible you could sustain, the higher deductible and the higher copayment.

With that nest egg of an HSA, you could negotiate the health insurance premiums down. You would manage your way, get your exercise, get your check-ups, because you would want to be able to live long and healthy to spend all of that mad money, if you choose, that balance of $800,000.

That is the kind of thing that is in front of us if we can get ObamaCare out of the way. Sell insurance across State lines, expand HSAs, address the

tort reform piece of this, which is billions of dollars a year that is unnecessarily spent on tests that are done to protect from the liability that is there.

With these packages, other good ideas that come from other Members doing this in the fashion and vision by our Founding Fathers, we go out to where all of the solutions are, out to the voices and ideas of the people, bring those ideas here.

Each of us, our job, the gentlewoman from Wyoming's job and mine, is to sort through the good ideas, bring the best ideas here to Washington, let our best ideas compete with the other good ideas, and put that out on the President's desk for the solutions that we really need.

I appreciate the attention and the opportunity to speak.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa for his leadership on this issue, for being a devoted husband, father, and father-in-law.

I know that the women in his life have influenced his perspective on these healthcare issues, as have so many of us. I thank him for participating in this discussion, this Special Order, celebrating Women's History Month.

I want to conclude the Special Order by highlighting two Republican women with whom I serve in Congress who are truly doing courageous things in their lives with their families.

First of all, Congresswoman CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS, who is the highest ranking Republican woman in this conference, is our conference leader. She is the mother of three children.

One is a special needs child, a friend to all of us, a delightful young man who was born while she was serving in Congress, as were her other two children.

The devotion that CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS has to her family and to parents of special needs children has brought about important legislation that is good for parents and special needs children all over this country.

As we celebrate this Women's History Month, I want to acknowledge our colleague CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS for her important role in this Congress as a leader on this issue and many others.

I also want to acknowledge our colleague JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER, who is from the State of Washington. JAIME, during a pregnancy which occurred while she also was serving as a Member of this Congress, as she still does, experienced a pregnancy that would have brought about the death of her child.

But because she was courageous enough to test and, like Laura's Law, allow a rather experimental treatment where she was injected with a saline solution in utero that allowed that baby to continue to mature until its birth, at which point it was allowed to grow and had dialysis, and then, at a point at which that child had become big enough and healthy enough, received an organ transplant from JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER's husband, the father of the child.

That child and that father and that mother, who we continue to serve with here in this Congress, are all doing well. This is the first known child to survive, given the condition that that child was identified as having before it was born.

Most doctors recommend that a parent terminate that pregnancy or, in many cases, that pregnancy will be terminated on its own without any involvement outside of the womb.

But in JAIME'S case, she took the extraordinary step of having a saline injection to allow that child to continue to grow and mature in a way that allowed it to be born.

This is a lovely child, another friend of all of ours, because, occasionally, that child visits us here in the Cloakroom behind this floor of the House.

What an honor to serve with these two courageous mothers who, while having these children and going through these extraordinary issues, are serving their States, their districts, their Nations in this Congress, and contributing to uplifting women in this country through their service to this Congress.

As I conclude this tribute to Women's History Month, I want to remind people that women in this Congress are making a difference with regard to legislation that affects all of us, whether they are in the avenues of natural resources, water, air—the areas that I spend most of my time on—whether they are in the areas of health care, jobs, or higher education.

The areas that women in Congress are interested in are as diverse as the areas that men are interested in, but women bring a different perspective to those same issues. Women look out into the future.

When I served in the Wyoming Legislature, our chief clerk, who sits up there just as these folks do and observes what is happening, was one day asked: Can you tell a difference between the way men and women legislate, regardless of whether they are Democrats or Republicans?

He said: Absolutely. Women are looking to the future. They are not focused on the next election. They are focused beyond the next election for what will be good for their children, their grandchildren, and future of the Nation.

□ 1445

As I observed his comments throughout my legislative years in Wyoming and now throughout my legislative years here, I think there is some truth to that. That is why I think it is so important that women be involved in the legislative process and participate in this great institution, which is the Congress of the United States, for the betterment of future generations.

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

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, on Monday night, we got word of a decision that may be the death knell for the budget proposal made by the majority of this body. The members of the self-styled Freedom Caucus have announced their refusal to support the plan that their own leadership has put forward. I am truly afraid of what they would offer as an alternative, because the budget being considered in committee this week is a far cry from what American families need.

Mr. Speaker, at its most fundamental level, a budget is two things: a guiding document and a statement of values. The budget that the House Republicans have put forward—the budget that is not enough for the Freedom Caucus—makes it clear that they value special interests more than working families. It is a guiding document to an America that is bereft of opportunity for those who have worked or have studied or have fought for it.

My colleagues and I are here on the floor tonight to support a very different plan—a budget that seeks to give everyday Americans the only opportunity they have ever asked for—the opportunity to work hard, to play by the rules, and to get ahead. It is a budget for the people, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that we call it The People's Budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Progressive Caucus budget would invest in our schools, our roads, our bridges, our workers, and our environment to put us back on the path to prosperity in a way that austerity never will, because the cuts of the past few years should have made one thing clear: trimming our spending does little to impact the long-term deficit, but it destroys working families, hinders the most vulnerable Americans, and threatens the future of our Nation.

The People's Budget would invest $1 trillion in our bridges, roads, railways, and other infrastructure facilities to prevent the kind of devastating failures we have witnessed in Flint, Michigan.

The People's Budget would fully fund Head Start, capitalizing on one of the best opportunities to give our young

people a leg up in an increasingly global economy.

The People's Budget would take steps to make debt-free college a reality for students, keeping higher education as a ladder into economic prosperity rather than making it a privilege for top earners.

The People's Budget would fully fund affordable housing programs, and it would end persistent family homelessness with an investment of $11 billion.

The People's Budget would take a stand on protecting our environment from further damage by investing in clean and renewable energy resources and ending subsidies for oil, gas, and coal once and for all. And that is just the beginning.

Our economy may be rebounding from the Great Recession, but there are plenty of Americans who have been left behind—stuck in roles with low wages, in long-term unemployment, in the gender and racial pay gaps that persist in this Nation, or in debt that keeps them from progressing in their lives. We can't afford to let this stand. We need a budget for the people, and we need it now.

Mr. Speaker, the budget that was announced by the majority yesterday is truly a roadmap to ruin. It would leave seniors out in the cold by ending the Medicare guarantee. It would gut domestic programming with $6.5 trillion in cuts—the most outrageous and threatening action ever proposed by the majority on the Budget Committee. It would make the gap between average Americans and the wealthy few too great to bridge, taking away any chance at restoring the vibrant middle class our economy relies on. It would do the same thing that my colleagues have tried to do for some time, which would be to stack the deck for top earners and the well-connected at the expense of everyone else.

The people need change. The people need a plan that levels the playing field, that gives them opportunities to succeed, and that puts their interests above the interests of corporations and the wealthy. The people need salaries to let them do more than just make ends meet. The people need a way to pay for affordable child care while they are at their jobs. The people need education for their children and teachers who are trained to give students the tools to succeed. They need roads that aren't crumbling and trains that stay on the tracks; they need bridges and tunnels that connect them with their jobs without their having to spend hours in traffic; and they need job training to find employment in a changing economy.

The people, Mr. Speaker, need The People's Budget.

I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON), my colleague and the chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Mr. ELLISON. I thank the Representative WATSON COLEMAN. I appreciate the gentlewoman's leadership during the Progressive Caucus Special Order hour. Every week, she helps give the world the progressive message, and I am so grateful that she does.

Mr. Speaker, let me mention that The People's Budget is really not just some document that members of the Progressive Caucus, when huddled in a room, drafted up. We actually believed that the people ought to participate in the writing of The People's Budget, so we engaged not only the ideas of constituents from our districts but also those from other people, like from the Economic Policy Institute, the people in the labor community, and others, who all had great ideas about how to formulate our budget. Altogether, we included the ideas of 44 different groups and of many, many individuals beyond that to support and help us draft The People's Budget. We want to thank all of them.

This really is a People's Budget because it puts forward the main thing that any budget ought to put forward in a budget from Congress, and that is the promotion of good-paying jobs.

Now, just because the unemployment rate has gotten to a lower level doesn't mean that we have got a great jobs picture for working Americans. The People's Budget would increase good-paying jobs by 3.6 million, and we are very proud of that. While Republicans may think that the best way to judge a budget is by how many dollars from the Federal budget they cut, we believe that the main way to judge a budget is by how many Americans are put to work in good-paying jobs.

How do we create these jobs?

One, by investing in our infrastructure. The People's Budget invests in $1 trillion so that we can rebuild our roads, bridges, railways, water systems, and grids. We make sure that the crumbling infrastructure that faces us right now gets fixed. That includes infrastructure in Flint, Michigan, and in other cities around this country where water infrastructure is so hard-pressed.

Beyond that, we will provide the protections that American workers need. The People's Budget calls for the protection of collective bargaining; it works to close the pay equity gap; it increases funding for worker protection agencies that crack down on wage theft and overtime abuses—but that $1 trillion will also save American lives.

Two weeks ago, I and many members of the Congressional Progressive and Black Caucuses traveled to Flint, Michigan, and I saw firsthand what happens when governments are run like a business. When money is the only consideration and when the Governor thinks that passing an emergency manager law just to cut costs at the expense of children's health and clean water, we see what the results of that kind of thinking are and that it is penny-wise, but incredibly pound-foolish. I met dozens of families who were exposed to dangerous levels of lead, but also people who were touched by the evils of Legionnaires' disease because of waterborne illness.

The People's Budget includes $765 million for the city of Flint so that we can replace toxic pipelines and provide health and education services for residents. Flint isn't the only city that is exposing residents to lead; so The People's Budget also includes $150 billion for waterlines nationwide.

We can never allow a tragedy like Flint's to happen again, but we have to make the investments right now. It is a simple choice: Do we believe that we should have a State's tax cuts go to the richest dead people? Should we cut their taxes? Should we cut the taxes of multinational, giant, profitable corporations? Or should we spend the money to help ensure the health and welfare of American children and other citizens?

I think we should look out for the American people. The People's Budget does that. We are glad to have the support of so many organizations, and we look forward to a very strong vote when the day arrives.

STOP VIOLENCE IN HONDURAS

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I want to make another statement which is unrelated to our budget, but it is still very important.

I am profoundly saddened and angered by the murders of Berta Caceres and Nelson Garcia, two leading environmental activists in the nation of Honduras. These two murders were less than 2 weeks apart. It is an ongoing challenge that must be addressed immediately.

Ms. Caceres spent decades fighting for the rights of Honduras' indigenous community, winning the Goldman Environmental Prize—an internationally recognized award—for her work. She was assassinated in her home while she was supposed to be under special protection by government security forces.

Mr. Garcia was a member of Ms. Caceres' organization, the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras. He was shot yesterday in front of his mother-in-law's home.

Honduras and the world have lost two extraordinary advocates for environmental and indigenous rights, and also for social justice.

We need to do more than mourn their losses. It is time to act. It is time to suspend assistance to the Honduras security forces until such time as we know they are not penetrated by illegal actors; until such time as we can be assured when they say they are going to protect somebody, those people are protected; and until we know and have confidence that American taxpayers' dollars are not being used to assassinate leaders who are doing nothing more than trying to improve the environment and increase the rights of indigenous people.

These assassinations fit into a pattern of attacks that has taken place against Honduran activists since the 2009 military coup. The NGO Global

Witness calls Honduras the most dangerous place in the world for environmental activists. More than 100 environmental activists have been killed in the last 5 years there, and many activists and community leaders remain at risk. We must do everything in our power to stop this violence and harassment in Honduras.

Please rest in peace, Berta Caceres and Nelson Garcia. The people who remain behind will continue to fight for environmental justice and indigenous rights, and we here in the United States join that fight.

U.S. SUPREME COURT NOMINEE MERRICK GARLAND

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to spend a few minutes on another important topic as well.

Today, President Obama nominated Chief Justice Merrick Garland to fill the vacancy that has been left on the Supreme Court by Associate Justice Antonin Scalia.

Judge Garland has more Federal judicial experience than any Supreme Court nominee in history. His work on the D.C. circuit court, an appointment to which he was confirmed with strong bipartisan support, has earned praise from Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. He is qualified. He is competent. He is not the ultraliberal that many of my conservative colleagues feared.

□ 1500

Yet, following up on his promise that the Senate would consider absolutely no one that President Obama put forward, Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL said today: ''It is a president's constitutional right to nominate a Supreme Court justice, and it is the Senate's constitutional right to act as a check on a president and withhold its consent.''

I beg to differ. I think it is the President's constitutional responsibility, not just a prerogative, to fill the bench of the Supreme Court. Withholding consent, something that is typically done when a candidate is underqualified or inappropriate, is far different than just ignoring the process altogether.

This is a political decision made about the only body that shouldn't be exposed to such things. It goes beyond just a filibuster or commentary from a few outliers.

And if Republicans follow through with their plan, it would constitute the longest vacancy with no vote on a nominee ever. There is no precedent for this. There have been appointments, nominations, and, above all, hearings during Presidential election years.

It is flat out ridiculous to refuse a man as qualified as Judge Garland even hearings. This is a dereliction of duty that surpasses the sadly run-of-the-mill inability of the majority to get anything done, from funding the government until the eleventh hour to passing a budget, to actually governing.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I came to the floor without taking the time to say this: The Senate must change course and consider Judge Garland on his merits. He has earned bipartisan support before, and he deserves it again.

I need to remind this body and the Senate that the President of the United States was elected for a second term and that term includes four full years.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude my Special Order hour.

I yield back the balance of my time.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 121

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week there were a few very important votes that occurred on complex issues that I would like to discuss here today. They were with regards to H. Con. Res. 75 and H. Con. Res. 121, which is the one I will discuss now.

Make no mistake. H. Con. Res. 121 is a war bill. It is a thinly veiled attempt to use the rationale of humanitarianism as a justification for overthrowing the Syrian Government of Assad.

Similar resolutions were used in the past to legitimatize the regime-change wars to overthrow the governments of Iraq and Libya. I will have no part of it. I voted ''no'' on H. Con. Res. 121. I voted ''no'' against more unnecessary interventionist regime-change wars.

We all know that Bashar al-Assad, President of Syria, is a brutal dictator. But this resolution's purpose is not merely to recognize him as such. Rather, it was a call to action. Specifically, it is a call to escalate our war to overthrow the Syrian Government of Assad.

For the last 5 years, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others have been working hand in hand in that war to overthrow the Assad Government, supposedly for humanitarian reasons. But I ask: How has this war to overthrow Assad actually helped humanity?

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have been killed. Millions have become homeless refugees. Much of the country's infrastructure has been destroyed.

Terrorist organizations like ISIS, al Qaeda, and others have taken over large areas of the country and are engaging in genocide.

Now the same people who are behind this war to overthrow Assad want to escalate that war, and this resolution is an attempt to gin up public support for that escalation.

This resolution urges the administration to create ''additional mechanisms for the protection of civilians,'' which is really coded language for the creation of a so-called no-fly zone or safe zone.

The creation of this no-fly zone or safe zone in Syria would be a major escalation of the war. Doing this would cost billions of dollars, require tens of thousands of ground troops, and a massive U.S. air presence. It won't work.

Furthermore, it will likely result in a direct confrontation between the United States and Russia. Fortunately, President Obama has thus far opposed implementing such a so-called no-fly zone and has resisted pressure to escalate this war in this way,

The fact is that the main areas currently in Syria where Christian, Alawites, Druze, Yazidis, and other religious minorities can practice their faith without fear of persecution are in the Syrian territories where Assad maintains control.

Therefore, the overthrow of Assad would worsen the genocidal activities by ISIS and al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations against Christians, Alawites, and other Syrian religious minorities.

If the U.S. has learned nothing else from Iraq and Libya, we should have learned that toppling ruthless dictators in the Middle East creates even more human suffering and strengthens our enemy, groups like ISIS and other terrorist organizations in those countries.

It is undeniable that, in both Iraq and Libya, humanitarian conditions today are far worse than they were before those governments were toppled and ISIS and other terrorist organizations are far more powerful with greater strongholds, causing even more suffering.

If the U.S. is successful in its current efforts to overthrow the Syrian Government of Assad, allowing groups like ISIS and al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations to take over all of Syria, which is what will happen, including those Assad-controlled areas where Christians and other religious minorities remain protected, the United States will be morally culpable for the genocide that will occur as a result.

This is exactly what happened when we overthrew Saddam Hussein in Iraq. It is what happened in Libya when we overthrew Muammar Gaddafi. To do the same thing over and over and expect a different result is the definition of insanity.

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

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives

and to continue the deliberation here that makes this the most deliberative body anywhere in the world.

I understand that the Senate might take issue with that. However, I am always happy to engage in debate with the Senators as well.

I came to the floor because I wanted to speak, Mr. Speaker, about an issue that has cost scores and scores of American lives.

Since the time I came into this Congress, I was surprised and, you might say, shocked and appalled that so few Members were paying attention to the reality of what is happening in the streets of America over the years.

I think of a school bus that was run off the road up in Cottonwood, Minnesota, a few years ago. Four of the children in that school bus were killed. Two of them were siblings. Three families were hit with that terrible tragedy.

The cause of that accident was a vehicle that ran the bus off the road that was driven by an illegal alien that had been interdicted multiple times and turned loose on the streets to recommit again and again.

I recall that discussion. It brought home to me something that I knew logically, but I hadn't felt emotionally at that point, Mr. Speaker.

If there are people in this country who are unlawfully present and the law directs that, when encountered by law enforcement, they shall be placed into removal proceedings, if we enforce the law when we encounter people that are illegally in America, then, by the very definition of following the law that requires that they are placed in removal proceedings, they are no longer on the streets of America, they are no longer driving vehicles that are running school buses off the road or bringing about head-on crashes or being involved in vehicular homicide or driving while under the influence because, by definition of enforcement of the law, they are not here to do that.

They might commit these crimes in other countries, in their home country. That is the issue for the countries that they can be lawfully present in.

But here, when I see the funerals of four children that come about because we had an opportunity to enforce the law and, instead, we decided that our compassion for the law breaker was greater than our compassion for the victim of the crime, you end up with four funerals of children that were riding home from school in a school bus that day.

Now, it shouldn't take very much for people who are professionals that deal with this every day to understand that, that if the law says that they shall be placed in removal proceedings—you have a President who says to them instead, through Jeh Johnson, who is now the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, to the law enforcement officers who have pledged and take an oath to support and defend the Constitution—which, by the way, the President takes an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution.

The very definition in the Take Care Clause of the Constitution is that he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

Well, instead, the President has decided to essentially execute some of the immigration law that exists. That doesn't mean enforce it. When I say that, I say that facetiously, Mr. Speaker. He has ordered the law enforcement officers to not enforce the law.

And the advice that came from Jeh Johnson to the law enforcement officers of the Border Patrol was, if you came into this job and put on this uniform and took your oath to support and defend the Constitution and you thought that it meant that you are going to enforce immigration law, if you think that is what you are going to do, you had better get another job.

That was the message to them that came out here about 10 days ago—get another job if you came here to enforce the law—if you are working for the Border Patrol or for ICE or for Customs and Border Protection.

It is an appalling thing, Mr. Speaker, to think that we have a President who has taken an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States and to take care that the laws be faithfully executed and, instead, he is taking care that they not be enforced in case after case after case. And this poster I have, Mr. Speaker, is the bloody result.

The title says ''Free to Kill: 124 Criminal Aliens Released By Obama Policies Charged With Homicide Since 2010.'' Now, that is not all of the homicides.

Here is where they are. A lot of them are in California. A good number of them are in Arizona, Texas, and up along the East Coast. They are in Council Bluffs, Iowa, or in Omaha. Yes, they are in my neighborhood as well, Mr. Speaker.

Now, that is 124 killers. These are criminals that had already been prosecuted, already been convicted. These are felons that had been released on the streets of America because of a policy that the President seems to think is a discretionary policy.

That is not 124 graves only. That is at least 135 graves because of the multiple murders that have taken place after they are convicted. At least two of them that were released on the streets in the past were already convicted of homicide-related charges. That is how bad this is.

The idea that we shouldn't enforce our laws even against people that are illegal in the United States, unlawfully present in America, out of some sense of compassion, and they might say that they don't have the room and they don't have the budget, well, that is not so either.

I would just note some of the statistics that I have pulled down here over time. In 2012, ICE reported that there were 850,000 aliens present in the country who had been ordered removed or excluded, but who had not departed. That is 850,000.

Now, they tell us that there are 11.2 million illegal aliens in America. Well, I don't actually accept that number. That is a number that has been constantly and commonly used here.

I arrived here in 2003. I swore in here in January of 2003. At that time, the immigration debate was talking about 12 million illegals in America. 12 million. 12 million. The drum of 12 million was beat for several years. Then it drifted down to 11.5. Now it is 11.2 million.

We are thinking that we have a crisis with illegal immigration coming into America. But the number hasn't increased? Have that many gone back home? Have that many died?

If not, that number is growing, and I think it has grown substantially more. The data we are looking at is 11.2 million, and that is from the Pew Research Center. I think they do a good job. I do disagree with them on that number.

If that is the case, out of 11.2 million illegals in America, 850,000 aliens are present in the United States of America who had already been ordered removed. We call that law enforcement?

Just about anybody in the world that has ever looked across and thought about coming to America knows that your chances of being sent back to your home country, if you succeed in getting into America, are nil. They are almost nothing.

If you embarrass the administration, if you are such a violent criminal, perhaps they will find a way to send you back. But even this administration, when they want to send them back, the few that they do, doesn't push hard on those other countries to take them back.

Now, every country in the world that refuses to take their illegals back, we have the leverage to convince them, I believe, to take those illegal aliens back, 850,000 of them.

□ 1515

I didn't divide that out, but it is roughly 1 in 12 of the illegal aliens in America have already been adjudicated for deportation, but they don't go, and we don't do anything about it.

Here is another statistic. For every 10 Americans detained in Federal court—that's Americans—173 illegal aliens are detained by a Federal court. So I don't know why they gave me 10 of 173, but I can divide that out in my head. Federal court deals with 17.3 illegal aliens for each American—that would be an American, lawful, permanent resident or an American citizen that they deal with. That is a high, high volume of illegal aliens going through our Federal court system.

Here is another piece of data that emerged from a study that I requested in 2005. This was a GAO study that shows that 27 percent of our Federal prison population is criminal aliens—27

percent. So more than a fourth of the inmates that are housed in Federal penitentiaries are criminal aliens. That is a huge percentage.

If you would think that they are in there for immigration crimes, for overstaying their visa, or for crossing the border, no. That is highly, highly unlikely that they are incarcerated for what this administration would call minimal offenses. They are in there for other things.

Here is another example. The illegal aliens represent 5 percent of the population, 27 percent of the Federal prison population, and presumably 27 percent of the Federal crimes that are committed as well. So that is a proportion of more than five times their representation in the population they are represented in prison and they are represented by the crimes that are committed.

Now, we should not think that these are just data, Mr. Speaker. Crimes aren't just data, because for every crime, there is at least one victim. The victims pay a huge, huge price that is not compensated by the taxpayer.

For example, our criminal laws are descended from old English common law, and old English common law recognizes this, that everything was the product, the property, of the sovereign, the king. If you went out and poached a deer, the crime was against the crown, because the king owned the deer. The king owned everything. So if you poached a deer, you killed the king's deer, and the king is going to have his justice. If you killed one of his subjects, one of his serfs, if you committed murder, the crime was against the crown.

That is why, today, the crimes that we have are against the State, whether it be the nation-state or whether it be the State that we happen to be abiding in. So when you go to criminal court, they will say this is the case of the State versus whoever has the charges brought against them, John Doe, criminal. You will hear that announced at the beginning of the criminal case: This is the case of the State of, say, Iowa, against John Doe, criminal.

The victim, if the victim is alive and survives and is in that criminal courtroom, they are going to be looking back and forth listening to the prosecution and then the defense go back and forth, and they are going to be wondering: Where am I in this equation? The victim is not in the equation because, if the State believes that they get justice, then justice is served, and the victim is essentially out of that equation with the exception of a few little things we have done such as to allow for and provide that the victim or the victim's family have an opportunity to face the accused and, actually, face the convicted.

So we are descendants from that, Mr. Speaker. When the crimes are committed against individuals, the victims of these crimes are paying the price. They are paying the price with their lives. They are paying the price with their bodies. They are paying the price with whatever their treasured products might be.

If they are a victim of assault and battery and grand larceny, then they have been beaten up, they have been pounded, they have been bruised and bloodied and maybe bones broken. Maybe they have survived an attempted homicide, and maybe their wallet was lifted and their credit cards or their car. The things that they owned, the things that they cherished are lost, and they have to heal up. We don't compensate them for their loss even though the State is an intervenor in a criminal crime.

So the case of the State v. John Doe, criminal, should tell us that the loss of life is not compensated either. It is not measured. It is not quantified. The 124 criminal aliens released who have committed murders during this period of time is a small portion of the overall number of criminal aliens who were released who did commit homicides.

But what are those lives worth?

We just heard the gentleman from Minnesota lament the loss of two lives. It is tragic. I am sorry he comes here to this floor. I am sorry that he feels that pain. I am sure the families feel the pain. But these are mostly anonymous victims, the four children in Cottonwood, Minnesota.

Kate Steinle—the story that I pulled here, her name is now a household name, Mr. Speaker—was murdered in San Francisco on July 1, 2015. Now when I see an attractive young lady with brown hair, immediately the picture of Kate Steinle flashes into my mind's eye, standing there innocently and shot and killed by a criminal alien who had been ordered deported, I believe the number would be at least twice before, on the streets because San Francisco is a sanctuary city.

Well, the sanctuary city isn't just exclusive to San Francisco. All over this country there are sanctuary jurisdictions. There are sanctuary jurisdictions in Iowa, at least 25 of them that I can identify, and they exist across the country, local jurisdictions that have decided they are not going to cooperate with Federal law enforcement officers.

And furthermore, when ICE puts out a detainer order, Federal law requires that an ICE detainer order is mandatory. The statute that was passed directed the rules to be written in such a way that the detainer orders are mandatory.

A year ago, February 25, I believe that day would be—I remember my date is right, but I am not certain on my year. It could be 2014 rather than 2015. But the ICE Acting Deputy Director, Dan Ragsdale, sent a letter out to hundreds of political jurisdictions, law enforcement jurisdictions, and said to them: This ICE detainer order that you have been getting, that you have been complying with because it is an order, it is really not an order. It is just a suggestion. So we are not going to enforce that, and neither are we going to protect you if you are sued for detaining someone that ICE has put a detainer order on.

They essentially said: We don't have your back at the Justice Department, even though the law directs that we do have. And so that brought about more sanctuary cities, more sanctuary jurisdictions, entire counties that have decided they are not going to cooperate with ICE. So when ICE sends an ICE detainer order to a sanctuary jurisdiction—often, a city—their policy is: We aren't going to turn this criminal over to ICE. We are going to turn him loose instead.

Well, when they turn them loose instead, they do so by the tens of thousands. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, that Americans are the victims of homicide as a result, some of it first-degree murder, second-degree murder, negligent homicide, vehicular homicide. Americans' graves are scattered all over this country at the hands of illegal aliens, criminal aliens, not only those that came across the border illegally—that makes them criminals, Mr. Speaker—but those who are in this country even legally. When they commit a crime, they become a criminal alien.

There are graves in every single State in this country, multiple graves in every single State in this country that didn't need to be. There are grieving families all over this country in every single State that didn't need to grieve. They didn't need to see their loved one killed, whether it was a car accident, whether it was a bullet, whether they were bludgeoned, however it might have been. Those lives could have been saved by enforcing the law. But, instead, the Obama administration does the opposite. They set up an affirmative plan to start turning loose illegal aliens who are felons, who are criminals.

Here is some more data. In 2014, according to a U.S. Sentencing Commission report, it shows illegal immigrants represented 36.7 percent of Federal sentences, 36.7 percent of their sentences. I have already said that 27 percent of the inmates are criminal aliens. Then, again, it is about roughly half or a little bit more of them are from Mexico.

The Obama administration, in 2013, released—and this number has been committed to my memory for some time—36,007 criminal aliens turned loose on the streets, and that represented 88,000 convictions, more than 88,000 convictions among those 36,007 criminal aliens. Of that, 193 had been convicted of homicide.

Now, when do you turn murderers loose on the streets of America, especially if they are deportable? If they serve their time—they might be second-degree murder, maybe they serve their time, maybe they get an early out—they go home to their home country. They are deported at the end of

their sentence. That is how our law reads.

But the Obama administration said: No, we are going to turn 36,007 of them loose: 193 homicides represented by them, 426 sexual assaults, 303 kidnappings, 1,075 aggravated assaults, all of that packaged up in the 36,007. That was just 2013. That was the beginning of this mass release of criminals who are criminal aliens, deportable criminal aliens out of our prisons.

In 2014, they slacked off a little bit. They only released 30,558 criminal aliens, and they represented 79,059 convictions. That is the work that is being done by the Obama administration. I could go on with data after data.

Here is one. ICE had been claiming to have removed record numbers of unlawful or otherwise removable aliens from the United States. Well, they counted their deportations differently than any administration before. So those that said they will accept a voluntary return when they are caught at the border, they will say: Well, we can put you in the van and haul you back to the port of entry and turn you loose to walk back across the bridge. If you will do that, we will count you as deported.

That used to be just voluntary return. Now the Obama administration has admitted that they have essentially jiggered the numbers and changed the category.

But even still, even if this isn't accurate in comparison to previous administrations, those numbers have gone down, from along the way, 389,834, fiscal year 2009. It did go up a little bit the next year, 392,000 and change, then up to 396,000, and then going back. The number in 2012 was almost 410,000.

So you can see, Mr. Speaker, that number has dropped off by tens of thousands. Then ICE has since admitted to dropping in removals clear down to 368,000 in 2013, 315,000 in 2014.

This number continues to go down, from up to nearly 410,000 down to 315,000, almost 100,000 fewer deportations when they are counting the voluntary returns in that list. That means we don't have a lot of immigration enforcement going on, and the message and the signal is: Come try to get into America. We are not going to do a lot about that in this Obama administration.

And what happens? Well, what happens is we have a Presidential nomination process that has emerged. Out of it comes, who got the first big bounce and spark off of making the pledge that he would build a wall, a beautiful wall, and he would return the people and end illegal immigration residence in America and put them the other side of the wall? That was Donald Trump. If Donald Trump doesn't have that issue, Donald Trump doesn't probably have a campaign. I am sure that it is a big part of what motivated him to run for President.

TED CRUZ also, Mr. Speaker, has the most solid and cleanest record on immigration policy. It is complete; it is inclusive; it is anti-amnesty all the way. And, by the way, he doesn't make provisions for inviting people back in after they are removed. I don't think that takes a whole lot of prudence to hold that position.

Why would you reward somebody that you needed to go to the trouble to adjudicate them for removal, deport them back to their home country, and then do as they said in the Gang of Eight bill? They have a provision in that bill that thankfully the House didn't take up. It is the ''we really didn't mean it'' clause in which they say, written into the Gang of Eight's bill, if you have been deported in the past and you are in your home country today, after the Gang of Eight bill presumably passed, you can apply to come to the United States.

□ 1530

We deported you before, but we really didn't mean it. We can bring you back in here. If we hadn't caught you in America and you had been here when the Gang of Eight bill would potentially become law, then, if you get to stay under those provisions, then you get to come back to America if you have previously been deported.

I think that is lunacy, Mr. Speaker, to be going to all the trouble to enforce the law and then to reverse course with that and provide the ''we didn't really mean it'' clause.

That bill, by the way, had in it prospective amnesty. In other words, it didn't deal with people who would come in after it became law, so, presumably, they would be treated with the same kind of amnesty or pass for those who were in America; and those that had been deported from America get to come back to America, too, with some exceptions if you are a bad enough criminal.

The logic of this is beyond my ability to reason with it, Mr. Speaker, but the logic that this country needs to reason with is the logic of the rule of law. We have to be a Nation of laws—not of men—and the laws need to apply to everyone equally, not applied differently to different people.

There has to be an expectation that the law will be enforced. If we don't have that, then we devolve into a Third World country. In a Third World country, you can get pulled over not even for not speeding, but you might have to pay off the officer in order to be able to drive on down the road. In this country, if that ever happens—I wouldn't say it never happens, but where I come from, it doesn't happen and I never hear of it—that would show a digression from the rule of law.

We have to all respect the law. The law has got to be enforced against everybody equally. There has to be an expectation that the law will be enforced. Any country that has any value to protecting its own sovereignty has to have borders.

We have borders. We know what they are: 2,000 miles on the southern border, roughly 4,000 miles on the norther border, oceans on the east and on the west. Those are the borders of the United States of America. We have water all the way around Hawaii. We know the lines in Alaska. We don't dispute them with Canada. We get along just fine agreeing on what our borders are. But if we don't enforce them, if we don't protect them, we are no longer a sovereign Nation.

We allow people to stream across the border. We have had Border Patrol testimony here in this Congress within the last decade where they testified that they believed that they interdicted perhaps 25 percent of those that attempted to cross the border. When you looked at the numbers of those interdictions and did the math on that, it turned out to be 4 million illegal border crossing attempts in a single year. That is roughly at the peak of this. That has diminished by a few million.

But think of that: 365 divided into 4 million works out to about 11,000 a night. About 11,000 illegal aliens come across our southern border at night. Maybe that number could be as far down as perhaps 6,000 or so, but that is still the size of Santa Anna's army. The size of Santa Anna's army comes across every night.

Coming across, sure, there are some decent people that are looking for a better life—maybe a lot of them—but 80 to 90 percent of the illegal drugs that are consumed in America come from or through Mexico. It is the demand in the United States that brings those drugs in here. We have a culpability in this, too.

But just the same, the violence in Mexico, the murders—over 100,000 people have been killed in the drug wars in Mexico—is all part of an open border situation that we have here in the United States, costing Mexican lives, costing American lives. Graves are scattered in every single State in the Union because we have an administration that decided not to enforce the law, even though the President takes an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and take care that the laws be faithfully executed. We have got executive overreach time after time after time. He has reached into the constitutional authority of this Congress.

Time after time, I brought an amendment to this floor, Mr. Speaker, that has cut off all funding to implement or enforce the President's lawless, unconstitutional amnesty actions, to cut off all funding under the Morton Memos, to cut off all funding to DACA, to cut off all funding to DAPA and shut down those operations that are outside the constitutional authority of the President, by my definition, by the definition of the majority vote in this Congress, and also by the definition of the President himself, who said multiple times—and we have him on videotape at least 22 times saying he didn't have constitutional authority to—I will put it in shorthand—grant amnesty. He

didn't use those words, but it certainly is the paraphrase of what he had to say. After multiple times of telling us all the proper constitutional interpretation, he decided to do it anyway.

The President of the United States' restraint factor is not giving his word, putting his hand on the Bible, and raising his right hand and taking an oath to the Constitution. His restraining factor is not his word. It is what he can get away with.

He demanded that Congress pass the Gang of Eight amnesty bill, and Congress said: Nuts, we are not doing that. We are not going to see the demographics of America forever altered by bringing in millions of undocumented Democrats in order to play into the hands of Barack Obama and the Democrats in the Senate and the House.

We have a responsibility to the American people. We the people need to decide. That is why our Founding Fathers wrote in the enumerated powers in the Constitution the responsibility of Congress to establish the naturalization laws and, by inference, to write the immigration laws. That immigration policy is not to be set by the President of the United States. It is to be set by Congress.

Congress wrote the law in 1996, the Immigration Reform Act, which LAMAR SMITH of Texas was so instrumental in, as a large body of the immigration law that we have to follow. That was the considered will of the people. It was the bipartisan, considered will of the people, signed by the President of the United States. Gee, that would be Bill Clinton back then, wouldn't it?

So we have a country that is the unchallenged greatest Nation in the world. We have a lot to be proud of. We have a destiny, an arc of history that has been flattened. It has been descending for a lot of reasons—economic reasons, cultural reasons, failure to adhere to our oaths to uphold the Constitution reasons—but in a large way, it is diminished because we have so little respect for the rule of law.

Of all of the things we can talk about with regard to immigration policy—securing our borders, ending sanctuary cities, making sure that local law enforcement works again in cooperation with Federal immigration officials, ending this idea that detainer orders are voluntary, not mandatory—piece after piece of this—an entry/exit system that tracks the people in the country and when they leave so we know what the balance is of those visitors who are here, and an E-Verify system that I will say the New IDEA Act, my bill—all of that put together brings America to the right place. We have an obligation to turn this into an upending arc of history, not descending.

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

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 38 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1733

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE) at 5 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 639, AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO APPEAR AS AMICUS CURIAE ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSE

Mr. BURGESS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–458) on the resolution (H. Res. 649) providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 639) authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 16, 2016.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on March 16, 2016, at 4:40 p.m., and said to contain a message from the President whereby he transmits a copy of an Executive Order he has issued, with respect to North Korea.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

BLOCKING PROPERTY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NORTH KOREA AND THE WORKERS' PARTY OF KOREA, AND PROHIBITING CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS WITH RESPECT TO NORTH KOREA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114–117)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the ''order'') with respect to North Korea. The order takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008, expanded in scope in Executive Order 13551 of August 30, 2010, relied upon for additional steps in Executive Order 13570 of April 18, 2011, and further expanded in scope in Executive Order 13687 of January 2, 2015. The order also facilitates implementation of certain provisions of the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016 (Public Law 114–122), which I signed on February 18, 2016, and ensures the implementation of certain provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2270 of March 2, 2016.

In 2008, upon terminating the exercise of certain authorities under the Trading With the Enemy Act (TWEA) with respect to North Korea, the President issued Executive Order 13466 and declared a national emergency pursuant to IEEPA to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the existence and risk of the proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material on the Korean Peninsula. Executive Order 13466 continued certain restrictions on North Korea and North Korean nationals that had been in place under TWEA.

In 2010, I issued Executive Order 13551. In that order, I determined that the Government of North Korea's continued provocative actions destabilized the Korean peninsula and imperiled U.S. Armed Forces, allies, and trading partners in the region and warranted the imposition of additional sanctions, and I expanded the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466. In Executive Order 13551, I ordered blocked the property and interests in property of three North Korean entities and one individual listed in the Annex to that order and provided criteria under which the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may designate additional persons whose property and interests in property shall be blocked.

In 2011, I issued Executive Order 13570 to further address the national emergency with respect to North Korea and to strengthen the implementation of UNSCRs 1718 and 1874. That Executive Order prohibited the direct or indirect importation of goods, services, and technology from North Korea.

In 2015, I issued Executive Order 13687, in which I determined that the provocative, destabilizing, and repressive actions and policies of the Government of North Korea constitute a continuing threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, and further expanded the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466. In Executive Order 13687 I provided additional criteria under which the Secretary of the

Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may designate additional persons whose property and interests in property shall be blocked.

I have now determined that the Government of North Korea's continuing pursuit of its nuclear and missile programs, as evidenced most recently by its February 7, 2016, launch using ballistic missile technology and its January 6, 2016, nuclear test in violation of its obligations pursuant to numerous UNSCRs and in contravention of its commitments under the September 19, 2005, Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, increasingly imperils the United States and its allies. The order addresses those actions and takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008. The order also facilitates implementation of certain provisions of the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016 (Public Law 114–122), which I signed on February 18, 2016, and ensures the implementation of certain provisions of UNSCR 2270 of March 2, 2016.

The order is not targeted at the people of North Korea, but rather is aimed at the Government of North Korea and its activities that threaten the United States and others. It blocks the property and interests in property of the Government of North Korea and the Workers' Party of Korea and provides additional criteria for blocking the property and interests in property of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to operate in such industries in the North Korean economy as may be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, such as transportation, mining, energy, or financial services;
- to have sold, supplied, transferred, or purchased, directly or indirectly, to or from North Korea or any person acting for or on behalf of the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea, metal, graphite, coal, or software, where any revenue or goods received may benefit the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea, including North Korea's nuclear or ballistic missile programs;
- to have engaged in, facilitated, or been responsible for an abuse or violation of human rights by the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea or any person acting for or on behalf of either such entity;
- to have engaged in, facilitated, or been responsible for the exportation of workers from North Korea, including exportation to generate revenue for the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea;
- to have engaged in significant activities undermining cybersecurity through the use of computer networks or systems against targets outside of North Korea on behalf of the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea;
- to have engaged in, facilitated, or been responsible for censorship by the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea;
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to have attempted to engage in any of the activities described above.

In addition, the order prohibits:

- the exportation of goods, services, and technology to North Korea;
- new investment in North Korea; and
- the approval, financing, facilitation, or guarantee of such exports and investments.

Finally, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien determined to meet one or more of the above criteria.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All executive agencies are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 15, 2016*.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. JACKSON LEE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of attendance of memorial service for Ms. Tiffany Johnson, who served the House of Representatives.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on March 15, 2016, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 1755. To amend title 36, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the congressional charter of the Disabled American Veterans.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 17, 2015, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

4657. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — New Animal Drugs for Use in Animal Feeds; Removal of Obsolete and Redundant Regulations [Docket No.: FDA-2003-N-0446 (formerly 2003N-0324)] received March 14, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4658. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Pharmaceutical Science and Clinical Pharmacology Advisory Committee [Docket No.: FDA-2016-N-0001] received March 14, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4659. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Unique Device Identification System; Editorial Provisions; Technical Amendment [Docket No.: FDA-2011-N-0090] received March 14, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4660. A letter from the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's FY 2015 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to Public Law 107-174, 203(a); (116 Stat. 569); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4661. A letter from the Supervisory Regulations Specialist, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Improving and Expanding Training Opportunities for F-1 Nonimmigrant Students With STEM Degrees and Cap-Gap Relief for All Eligible F-1 Students [DHS Docket No.: ICEB-2015-0002] (RIN: 1653-AA72) received March 14, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4662. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's 2015 Data Mining Report to Congress, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2000ee-3(c)(1); Public Law 110-53, Sec. 804(c)(1); (121 Stat. 363); to the Committee on Homeland Security.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. CHAFFETZ: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 4360. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that a Federal employee who leaves Government service while under personnel investigation shall have a notation of any adverse findings under such investigation placed in such employee's official personnel file, and for other

purposes; with amendments (Rept. 114–454). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 3583. A bill to reform and improve the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Office of Emergency Communications, and the Office of Health Affairs of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–455, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 4404. A bill to require an exercise related to terrorist and foreign fighter travel, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–456). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SESSIONS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 639. Resolution authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674 (Rept. 114–457). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. SESSIONS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 649. Resolution providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 639) authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674 (Rept. 114–458). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Energy and Commerce discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3583 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 4749. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an oil and gas lease sale for areas off the coast of North Carolina determined by the Secretary to have the most geologically promising hydrocarbon resources, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MACARTHUR (for himself and Mr. LANGEVIN):

H.R. 4750. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the prohibition on providing adoptive leave to each member of a dual military couple; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. STEWART, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Mr. GOSAR):

H.R. 4751. A bill to terminate the law enforcement functions of the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management and to provide block grants to States for the enforcement of Federal law on Federal land under the jurisdiction of these agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROHRABACHER:

H.R. 4752. A bill to require the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to investigate and promote the exploration and development of space leading to human settlements beyond Earth, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. VARGAS (for himself and Mr. DONOVAN):

H.R. 4753. A bill to exclude from consideration as income under the United States Housing Act of 1937 certain veterans compensation and pensions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. NADLER, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. BASS, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. RUSH, Ms. BROWN of Florida, and Mr. FATTAH):

H.R. 4754. A bill to require the Attorney General to ensure that State-appointed emergency financial managers do not violate Constitutional protections and that they ensure public health and safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. COMSTOCK (for herself, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts):

H.R. 4755. A bill to inspire women to enter the aerospace field, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, through mentorship and outreach; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H.R. 4756. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permit nurse practitioners to satisfy the documentation requirement under the Medicare program for coverage of certain shoes for individuals with diabetes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MILLER of Florida:

H.R. 4757. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the eligibility for headstones, markers, and medallions furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for deceased individuals who were awarded the Medal of Honor and are buried in private cemeteries; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MILLER of Florida:

H.R. 4758. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the award of the Presidential Memorial Certificate to certain deceased members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces and certain deceased members of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MILLER of Florida:

H.R. 4759. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay costs relating to the transportation of certain deceased veterans to veterans' cemeteries owned by a State or tribal organization; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BUCK (for himself, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CHAFFETZ, and Mr. RATCLIFFE):

H.R. 4760. A bill to make an attack on a police officer a hate crime, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California (for herself, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. BERA, Mr. COOK, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. PELOSI, Ms. LEE, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. COSTA, Mr. HONDA, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. FARR, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. AGUILAR, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. BECERRA, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. BASS, Mr. ROYCE, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. HAHN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. PETERS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. NUNES, Mr. MCCARTHY, Mr. KNIGHT, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. CALVERT, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. ISSA, and Mr. HUNTER):

H.R. 4761. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 61 South Baldwin Avenue in Sierra Madre, California, as the ''Louis Van Iersel Post Office''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. COFFMAN (for himself, Mr. TAKAI, and Mr. GRIFFITH):

H.R. 4762. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to cellular therapies; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HONDA, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. KEATING, Mr. POCAN, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. NADLER, and Ms. HAHN):

H.R. 4763. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and the Portal-to-Portal Act of 1947 to prevent wage theft and assist in the recovery of stolen wages, to authorize the Secretary of Labor to administer grants to prevent wage and hour violations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. DESANTIS (for himself, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. ROTHFUS, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. NUGENT, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. FLORES, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. SALMON, Ms. GABBARD, and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 4764. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide service dogs to certain veterans with severe post-traumatic stress disorder; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER:

H.R. 4765. A bill to provide first responders with planning, training, and equipment capabilities for crude oil-by-rail and ethanol-by-rail derailment and incident response, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. MCKINLEY (for himself, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, and Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia):

H.R. 4766. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to American military personnel who fought in defense of Bataan, Corregidor, Guam, Wake Island, and the Philippine Archipelago between December 7, 1941, and May 10, 1942, and who died or were imprisoned by the Japanese military in the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Manchuria, Wake Island, and Guam from April 9, 1942, until September 2, 1945, in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service to their country; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. NADLER (for himself, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, and Mr. CONYERS):

H.R. 4767. A bill to provide safe, fair, and responsible procedures and standards for resolving claims of state secret privilege; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RATCLIFFE (for himself, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. MARINO, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. BUCK, Mr. YOHO, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. BRAT, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. BABIN, Mr. SALMON, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. PALMER, Mr. MESSER, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. TROTT, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. ISSA, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. CULBERSON, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. WALKER, Mr. OLSON, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. GOSAR, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. GRIFFITH, and Mr. SMITH of Texas):

H.R. 4768. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, with respect to the judicial review of agency interpretations of statutory and regulatory provisions; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 4769. A bill to repeal the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Incentive Program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. TIBERI (for himself, Mr. NEAL, Mr. STIVERS, and Mrs. BEATTY):

H.R. 4770. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide appropriate rules for the application of the deduction for income attributable to domestic production activities with respect to certain contract manufacturing or production arrangements; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. LOFGREN (for herself, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. HOYER, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HONDA, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. SCHRADER, and Mr. CLYBURN):

H. Res. 646. A resolution expressing the position of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15-674; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana (for herself and Ms. DELAURO):

H. Res. 647. A resolution recognizing the Girl Scouts of the USA on the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouts, which has stood for excellence and leadership for girls everywhere since 1916; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. RENACCI (for himself, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. BRAT, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. BARR, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana):

H. Res. 648. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives respecting budget-related points of order; to the Committee on Rules.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 4749.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution.

By Mr. MACARTHUR:

H.R. 4750.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress ''to provide for the common Defence'', ''to raise and support Armies'', ''to provide and maintain a Navy'' and ''to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces'' as enumerated in Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ:

H.R. 4751.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2: relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. ROHRABACHER:

H.R. 4752.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: The Congress shall have power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with Indian tribes.

and

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department of Officer thereof

By Mr. VARGAS:

H.R. 4753.

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

The power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution, to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing Powers (Article I, Section 8, Clauses 12, 13 and 14), and all other powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or officer thereof.

By Mr. CONYERS:

H.R. 4754.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 and Article I, Section 8, Clause 18.

By Mrs. COMSTOCK:

H.R. 4755.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18:

The Congress shall have power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department of Officer thereof.

By Mr. REED:

H.R. 4756.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. MILLER of Florida:

H.R. 4757.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MILLER of Florida:

H.R. 4758.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MILLER of Florida:

H.R. 4759.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BUCK:

H.R. 4760.

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

Pursuant to clause 1, section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution of the United States which states: ''The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts, and provide for the common Defense and General Welfare of the United States; but all Duties and Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.''

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California:

H.R. 4761.

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

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

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 4762.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Ms. DELAURO:

H.R. 4763.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. DESANTIS:

H.R. 4764.

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

Article 1, Section 8: The Congress shall have the Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER:

H.R. 4765.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. MCKINLEY:

H.R. 4766.

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

According to Article I, Section 8, Clause 5 of the Constitution, ''The Congress shall have power to coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures''

By Mr. NADLER:

H.R. 4767.

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

Clause 3 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution and clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. RATCLIFFE:

H.R. 4768.

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

Article III, Section 1, Sentence 1, and Section 2, Clauses 1 and 4, of the Constitution, in that the legislation defines or affects judicial powers and cases that are subject to legislation by Congress; Article I, Section 1, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, in that the legislation concerns the exercise of legislative powers generally granted to Congress by that section, including the exercise of those powers when delegated by Congress to the Executive; and, Article I, Section 8, clause 18 of the United States Constitution, in that the legislation exercises legislative power granted to Congress by that clause ''to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 4769.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: Congress has the authority ''to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes''

By Mr. TIBERI:

H.R. 4770.

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

Article 1, Section 7 which provides that ''All bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives.''

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 612: Mr. DESANTIS.

H.R. 619: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 654: Mr. OLSON and Mr. CALVERT.

H.R. 664: Mr. KIND, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. BEYER, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. VELA, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. CLYBURN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Ms. PLASKETT.

H.R. 752: Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 759: Mr. POLLS.

H.R. 815: Mr. HULTGREN and Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.

H.R. 816: Mr. STUTZMAN.

H.R. 842: Mr. WHITFIELD.

H.R. 953: Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 969: Mr. ROUZER and Mrs. CAPPS.

H.R. 986: Mr. DENT and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.

H.R. 1336: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.

H.R. 1427: Ms. GRAHAM, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. CLAY, Mr. O'ROURKE, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 1431: Mr. MILLER of Florida and Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.

H.R. 1432: Mr. MILLER of Florida and Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.

H.R. 1479: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 1586: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina and Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 1594: Mr. WALDEN, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. GRAYSON, and Mr. CHABOT.

H.R. 1859: Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. JONES, Mr. GALLEGO, and Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 2342: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 2434: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 2460: Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 2697: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 2799: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H.R. 2802: Mr. RICE of South Carolina.

H.R. 2817: Mr. ASHFORD and Mr. HILL.

H.R. 2894: Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 2896: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. GUINTA, Mr. OLSON, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 2932: Mr. CÁRDENAS.

H.R. 2962: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 2992: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. MENG, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. WELCH, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Ms. KUSTER, and Mrs. DINGELL.

H.R. 3080: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 3222: Mr. FLEISCHMANN and Mr. RICE of South Carolina.

H.R. 3235: Mr. POCAN and Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 3365: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia and Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 3381: Mr. ELLISON, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. MOORE, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 3429: Mr. EMMER of Minnesota.

H.R. 3514: Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Ms. MENG, and Ms. TSONGAS.

H.R. 3673: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 3684: Mr. JONES.

H.R. 3690: Ms. EDWARDS.

H.R. 3691: Ms. NORTON, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 3817: Mr. TED LIEU of California.

H.R. 3880: Mr. SHIMKUS.

H.R. 3892: Mr. RENACCI and Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 3986: Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 4116: Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. KIND, and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 4177: Mr. HUDSON.

H.R. 4184: Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 4219: Mr. TIBERI and Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina.

H.R. 4248: Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 4262: Mr. LONG.

H.R. 4336: Mrs. DINGELL and Mr. POMPEO.

H.R. 4352: Mr. OLSON.

H.R. 4369: Mr. ROYCE.

H.R. 4400: Mr. LONG.

H.R. 4448: Mr. PITTENGER.

H.R. 4534: Mr. KLINE, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. HUNTER, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, and Mr. MCCAUL.

H.R. 4554: Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 4562: Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H.R. 4570: Mr. MEEKS and Mr. YARMUTH.

H.R. 4584: Mr. OLSON.

H.R. 4592: Ms. DELAURO, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. CARNEY, and Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 4622: Mr. PEARCE.

H.R. 4633: Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 4637: Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 4640: Mr. RANGEL and Mr. JONES.

H.R. 4651: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.

H.R. 4664: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 4668: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 4678: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H.R. 4682: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 4715: Mr. HURT of Virginia and Mr. ROUZER.

H.R. 4730: Mr. BENISHEK, Mrs. BLACK, and Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 4747: Mr. LOUDERMILK and Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.

H.J. Res. 54: Mr. RIBBLE.

H. Res. 112: Mrs. WALORSKI.

H. Res. 156: Mr. CÁRDENAS.

H. Res. 290: Mr. CHABOT, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. RIBBLE.

H. Res. 615: Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H. Res. 621: Mr. BARTON.

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Senate

The Senate met at 10:15 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.

Sovereign Lord, You are our strong shelter and hiding place. We praise You for Your love and wisdom. Lord, You are too wise to make a mistake, too loving to be unkind, and too powerful for Your providence not to prevail. We are grateful that You have the final word about what happens in our Nation and world, so teach us to patiently wait for Your will to be done. Guide our lawmakers, giving them a clear comprehension of Your plans for our Nation. As they depend upon Your wisdom, fill them with the courage to accomplish those things that will unite rather than divide us. Inspire us all to experience the constancy of Your presence.

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. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD LABELING BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as we all know, the President will be making an announcement this morning on the Supreme Court. I will have more to say about that later this morning.

As for the legislation currently before the Senate, the Senate will resume its consideration of bipartisan legislation aimed at protecting middle-class families from unfair higher food prices. It is a commonsense solution founded on science-based standards. Let's advance it together. If colleagues have other ideas on the issue, I would again encourage them to work with the bill managers to process any alternative solutions they may have.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2686

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2686) to clarify the treatment of two or more employers as joint employers under the National Labor Relations Act.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

PRESIDENT'S NOMINEE TO THE SUPREME COURT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in just a few minutes President Obama will officially announce his nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court. In considering a nomination to the highest Court in the Nation, the President has said he would adhere to three important principles: First, the nominee must possess impeccable credentials. That means an outstanding education, critical judicial experience, and an expert understanding of the law. Second, the nominee should have a keen awareness of the judiciary's role. That means understanding the Court's constitutional place in our government, and its limitations; third, and finally, life experience. A qualified Supreme Court Justice is someone with an understanding of the realities that Americans face each and every day.

I have no doubt how hard this must have been for the President. I have no doubt President Obama's nominee will possess these important attributes just outlined. Once President Obama has done his constitutional duty and announced publicly this nominee, it will then fall upon the Senate to provide its advice and consent. For 100 years we have had these hearings in public, going back to during Justice Brandeis' hearing.

The Republican leader has made it clear that he and his caucus have no intention of considering the nominee. It is hard to comprehend but that is what he said, and it appears at this stage, basically, all Republicans have fallen in line with this. I hope President Obama's nomination of an exceptionally qualified and consensus nominee will persuade Senate Republicans to change course. I do hope they will do their constitutional duty and give President Obama's nominee a meeting, a hearing, and a vote. He is doing his job this morning. Republicans should do theirs this morning too.

Mr. President, will the Presiding Officer announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

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

NATIONAL SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany S. 764, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 764, a bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the House amendment to the bill with McConnell (for Roberts) amendment No. 3450 (to the House amendment to the bill), in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11:45 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 ask unanimous consent that the time be charged equally.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise to express my disappointment that we have not yet been able to come to an agreement on the issue of GMO labeling. Senator ROBERTS and I have a long history of friendship and of working together. We have both worked very hard to come to an agreement on an extremely difficult and emotional issue. I thank him for his continual work, and I am forever the optimist that we will get there, even though we are not there yet. We have continued to work, and my team and I have continued to work, to find common ground, all the way until very late last night. If we at this point do not proceed but can have some more time, I believe it is possible for us to come together in a bipartisan solution.

While this debate has been difficult, there are some important areas where Senator ROBERTS and I agree. For instance, Senator ROBERTS and I agree that the science has shown us that biotechnology is safe.

In fact, leading health organizations like the American Medical Association, the National Academy of Sciences, the FDA, and the World Health Organization all say there is no evidence that GMOs aren't safe. We agree that biotechnology is an important tool for farmers and ranchers, particularly as we tackle the challenges of climate change—which, by the way, science also tells us is real. I believe in science, and I would love if we would all come together around the science on both of these issues.

We have to tackle the need to feed a growing, hungry world. We agree that a 50-State patchwork of labeling laws is not a workable long-term solution. In fact, I don't know any Member on any side of this issue in the Senate who doesn't agree with that, that we have to have a national approach, not 50 different States. But we also know, as we have frequently debated States' rights, the importance of States making decisions, that when we preempt States, whether it is on fuel efficiency standards for automobiles or whether it is on food labeling, the approach has always been to go from 50 different States doing 50 different things to having a national standard and a national approach. As it was with CAFE standards, in which I was very involved, it is important that it work from an industry standpoint. I know it can be done, and it is our job to get to that point.

We also recognize, though, that a growing number of American consumers want to know more about the food they eat, and they have the right to know. They have the right to know what is in their food.

I was very proud of the fact that we came together on the last farm bill to recognize all parts of agriculture. The fastest growing part of agriculture is the organic sector. We gave more opportunities to support the organic sector, the local food movement.

People should have choices in deciding what food they eat, how it is grown, how it is processed, and that is something we have said in national policy that we support through our agricultural policies. Unfortunately, the Senate is poised to vote on a bill that I do not support, that does not fully answer this demand from consumers. Consumers want information about the food they eat, it is as simple as that. In fact, the bill continues the status quo on providing information to consumers. It lists a number of things, many of which are already being done, 1–800 numbers and so on. Look at the back of the pack; it lists things, but they are things that are already being done—not all but many, enough—and then says: We will keep the status quo nationally, but we will preempt the States and citizens around the country from taking individual action. I don't support that. That is not good enough. It doesn't reflect what we do when we are talking about Federal policy. That is one reason I think the approach put forward in the bill is the wrong path.

Unfortunately, we have seen a lot of emotion around this issue on both sides—a lot of emotion. Frankly, there is a lot of confusion about GMOs and their safety, which is why I think this approach is the wrong approach. We should be telling the story, as should farmers, of biotechnology and the importance that it plays in our food production and in food security. We should not be taking action that further appears to stop consumers from getting the information they want and feeds into the idea that there is something wrong, that there is a reason to hide, because there is not. We should embrace this opportunity to share with the public what is in our food, talk about it, why we use these crops, why they are deemed safe.

That is why, during the last several months of negotiations with Chairman ROBERTS, I offered several proposals that would shed light on this issue and do it in a way that is eminently workable for those involved in the food industry. While those proposals were not ultimately accepted, I still believe we need and can achieve a policy that creates a uniform national system of disclosure for the use of GMO ingredients and do it in a way that has common sense and works for everybody. The national disclosure system needs to provide real options for disclosing information about GMOs that work for both consumers and food companies.

I believe we must create a system that provides certainty as well to our food companies and all of our companies—national, organic, traditional companies. Everyone knows that a 50-State system with 50 different definitions, 50 different laws, and 50 different ways to do packaging doesn't work, so we all have a need to come together and to fix this. I also believe that a system must work for all companies—very small companies, medium-sized companies, and large companies as well.

I believe we must not harm the important work being done by our organic producers. Again, we made great strides in the farm bill, and we need to keep the choices that are in the marketplace now available to consumers and not pass something that will infringe on any of the choices consumers have.

I am disappointed that we have not yet been able to come to a clear consensus on the issue of GMO labeling. I know this issue is contentious. As I said, it is very emotional on all sides. As far as I am concerned, it is time for us to come together on a thoughtful, commonsense approach that is best for consumers, for farmers, for families, and for our country.

We have the most successful agricultural system, food economy in the world. We are the envy of the world. We want to make sure that whatever we do, we maintain that position. But part of who we are in America is a country that believes in people's right to know information and be able to make their own individual choices. I believe there is a way to do that, to make sure we continue to have the strongest, most vibrant, most successful and robust agricultural economy and food economy in the world—we are literally feeding the world—and at the same time be able to provide basic information that American consumers are asking to have provided.

I will not be supporting Senator ROBERTS' amendment. I think this may be

the first time in the years we have worked together—both with me as chair and now with him as chair—that we have not come to the floor united. It is not for lack of trying. We have been working very hard, and there are differences, but I believe that if we have the opportunity to keep working, we will be able to get to that spot where we can come together.

As I urge colleagues to oppose this proposal and moving forward on cloture without having an agreement, I also commit to continue working to get there because we have to take action to solve this problem and it has to be done in a bipartisan way. That is how we get things done, and I am committed to continuing to work with our chairman and with Members on both sides of the aisle so we can do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise this morning to discuss an issue that is pretty near and dear to my heart and I think to the hearts of many throughout the State of Alaska, and that is—I will call it an aberration, an aberration in the fish world. What I am talking about is genetically engineered salmon, GE salmon.

We just heard from the ranking member on the Senate Committee on Agriculture. I appreciate the work she has done, along with the Senator from Kansas, to try to forge a path forward as it relates to GMO, but when we are talking about genetically engineered salmon, let me make it very clear that we are talking about two very distinct and different issues here. This is separate from the larger GMO debate.

Genetically engineered animals are not crops, and GE salmon is a genetically engineered animal. This is something that is entirely new. This is a new species. This is a new species that will potentially be introduced into our markets, into our homes, and quite possibly, contrary to what any environmental analysis claims, enters into our ecosystem.

When we are talking about the GMO, the broader GMO debate here on the floor, keep in mind that when I stand up, when the other Senator from Alaska stands up, when Alaskans stand up to talk about genetically engineered salmon, we are talking about an entirely different issue.

I get pretty wound up about this issue. I just came from a meeting of about 20 young Alaskans from around the State.

I said: I am sorry, I have to leave because I have to go to the floor to speak to this issue that is so important to us in Alaska. Do you all know what genetically engineered salmon is?

They said: Yeah. It is kind of that fake fish.

It is Frankenfish, is what we call it because it is so unnatural. It is so unnatural that it is something that, as Alaskans, we need to stand up and defend against.

I grew up in the State of Alaska. I was born there. I know well that escaping from pens occurs in hatcheries, and it can occur in facilities where fish are grown. I also well know the immense value of our fisheries and the potential for havoc that something like this Frankenfish could wreak upon our wild sustainable stocks.

I am standing here this morning saying that I will not be supporting cloture on this bill, as it is an issue which is too important to so many and has not yet been adequately addressed. I have attempted to work with the chairman and the committee to offer sensible and what we believe are reasonable fixes, but there is no solution as of yet.

I am standing today demanding, asking that the voices of Alaskans, who have stood with me in solidarity on this issue, be heard because we will not accept that genetically engineered salmon or Frankenfish—whatever it is you want to call it—we will not accept that it will be allowed to be sold without clear labeling because I don't want to make any mistakes; I don't want to find that what I have served my family is a genetically engineered fish, and I use ''fish'' lightly.

We talk about Frankenfish and some people kind of snicker nervously, but it is not a joke to Alaskans. This new species could pose a serious threat to the livelihoods of Alaskan fishermen, and I will stand to support the livelihood of Alaskan fishermen. Alaska's fisheries are world-renowned for their high quality and for their sustainability. The Alaska seafood industry supports more than 63,000 direct jobs and contributes over $4.6 billion to the State's economy. Nearly one in seven Alaskans is employed in the commercial seafood industry.

That is how my boys put themselves through college—working in the commercial fishing industry. We know about fish. For generations, my family has been involved in one way, shape, or form with the fishing business.

Salmon is a major part of Alaska's seafood economy, and commercial fishermen around the State harvested more than 265 million salmon this past season, including chinook, sockeye, coho, chum, pinks—all wild.

As we all know, wild salmon is loaded with all of the good things in it that God has placed there: tremendous health benefits, lean protein, source of omega-3s, B–6, B–12, Niacin—everything good, all in that natural wild package.

More than 1.5 million people wrote to the FDA opposing approval of genetically engineered salmon. So you have a groundswell of support around the country—this is not just from Alaskans weighing in. People are saying: No, we don't think this should be approved.

The FDA went ahead anyway. Then you have a growing number of grocery stores—Safeway, Kroger, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, and Target—that have all announced they are not going to sell this. They are not going to sell this genetically engineered species in their stores.

Yet, despite this immense opposition, in November of last year, the FDA approved AquaBounty Technologies' application for its genetically engineered AquAdvantage salmon. So for those of you who are not fully informed on what this genetically engineered fish is—how it comes about—GE salmon start from a transgenic Atlantic salmon egg. This is an ocean pout. It is a type of an eel. As you can see, it doesn't look anything like a salmon, even if you don't know your salmon very well. This is a bottom-dwelling ocean pout eel.

They take a slice of DNA from this, a slice of DNA from a magnificent Chinook salmon, and splice it into an Atlantic salmon egg. That egg is meant to produce a fish that will grow to full size twice as fast as a normal Atlantic salmon. So this is the push here—to push Mother Nature, which creates a perfectly beautiful fabulous salmon, and to take a slice of DNA here and a slice of DNA there and put it in an Atlantic salmon, which is a farmed fish, and grow it so that it grows twice as fast as a normal fish, but growing it in penned condition, theoretically, so that there is no way for escape. But are we guaranteed that there is no way for escape? I don't know. Show me that.

But what we have here, I think, is a fair question as to whether or not this GE salmon can even be called a salmon. So the FDA signed off on this last November. But they made no mandatory labeling requirement. Instead, they said: Labels can be voluntary. So, in other words, if you want to say that this piece of fish that is in front of you in the grocery store is genetically engineered—or not real—you can voluntarily put that on your label. Nobody is going to do that. Nobody is going to voluntarily say this is genetically engineered.

So what we have done—what I have done—is to fight to secure a mandatory labeling requirement both before approval of AquaBounty's application and since its approval. So we have been working hard on this issue. We have made some significant headway. But what we are dealing with on the floor right now—this legislation—would wipe that work clean, instead of using legislative tools at our disposal to effectively and precisely amend this legislation in order to address the issue of GE salmon.

So what we did is that we got some language in the Omnibus appropriations bill that requires the FDA not to allow the introduction of any food that contains GE salmon until it publishes final labeling guidelines that inform consumers of that content. So what this did is that this kind of forced the FDA to issue an import alert, which effectively bans all imports of genetically engineered salmon for 1 year.

But it also directs the FDA to spend funds—significant funds—of no less than $150,000 to develop labeling guidelines and to implement a program to

disclose to consumers whether salmon offered for sale to consumers is genetically engineered.

Again, what we want to be able to do is to let consumers know whether this fish is genetically engineered or not. So we thought that was a pretty clear labeling mandate to the FDA. But the FDA then later came back to us and said they felt that there was still clarifying legislation that we needed to do. So I have worked with Senator SULLIVAN, my colleague from Alaska, as well as Senators CANTWELL, MERKLEY, and HEINRICH, and we introduced S. 738, which is the Genetically Engineered Salmon Risk Reduction Act.

We also introduced a separate piece of legislation to respond to the FDA's November approval. We introduced S. 2640, the Genetically Engineered Salmon Labeling Act. What that bill would do is kind of to build on last year's omnibus provisions and would require labeling of genetically engineered salmon through language that I received through technical assistance working with the FDA on this.

Additionally, we would mandate a third-party scientific review of the FDA's environmental assessment of AquAdvantage salmon and the effects that these GE salmon would have on wild stocks and ecosystems, which, in my opinion—and I think, in the opinion of many others—were insufficiently addressed during the FDA's environmental assessment.

So we have been working with the FDA on this, to develop this language to mandate labeling. The FDA has been cooperative at this point working on this issue. That really is a significant step forward.

But it required me to do something that maybe others are perhaps a little more active on—to place a hold on a nominee. I placed a hold on the FDA Commissioner, Dr. Robert Califf. This is not something that I do lightly. I have not placed a hold on a nominee before. I don't take this action lightly. But it was necessary. It was necessary to bring to the attention of the FDA the significance of this issue and the seriousness of what we were dealing with.

So we got FDA to the table. We have been working with them. They have been listening. They have been helpful. We are so close to resolving this. Now we are on the floor with GMO legislation. Again, as I said at the outset, GMO is different than what we are dealing with in this genetically engineered species, a new species designed for human consumption here.

My concern is that with the GMO bill before us now, it really does threaten the good progress we have made at this point in time. It is not just the progress that the Alaska delegation made but really the work of so many Alaskans, the bipartisan hard-working efforts of so many around the country who share the same concerns.

I think we have offered some pretty sensible solutions. I will continue to offer them. I will continue my efforts to work with the chairman, for whom I have great respect. Know that, while it is not opposition to the overall bill or its underpinnings, where my concern remains is mistakenly allowing genetically engineered salmon into our homes, mislabeled as salmon.

This is something that we will continue to raise awareness on and raise the issue until we have finally and fully resolved it.

IDITAROD SLED DOG RACE

Mr. President, if I still have a few minutes more this morning, I would like to switch topics and speak about the last great race—the last great race in Alaska and really around the world, which is the Iditarod sled dog race, a 1,049-mile race from south central Alaska to Nome, AK, where man-and-dog teams are up against Mother Nature, improbably one of the most incredible human and animal endeavors that are out there.

Yesterday, we saw the conclusion. We greeted the front runner to the 44th Iditarod sled dog race. So for 44 years now, it is an amazing race from Willow to Nome. Again, when you think about man and dog out on the ice, out in the raw wilderness for 1,000 miles, this race has been described as the equivalent of an attempt at Mount Everest.

When you think about all that is Alaska and the open spaces, the independent people, and just man against nature or woman against nature, it is really the Iditarod that epitomizes so much of it. It demands not only the most out of our athletes but mental conditioning as well. It requires exceptional endurance, courage, and sound judgment as you navigate these amazing places. But it is not just the men or women who are the physical athletes. It is not just their judgment that guides this race. It is that of the teams—the dogs themselves.

When you think about the amazing teamwork that goes on between a musher and his or her animals—the communication and the will to go 1,000-plus miles in extraordinary conditions—it really is something that just stirs the greatest imagination. We have had Iditarods where teams have literally buried into the wind coming at them at 50 miles an hour and 30 below, in the dark, attacked by moose on the trail, losing the trail, with accidents, disasters.

I was going to say it is like a reality TV show. Only it is not a reality TV show. It is what Alaskans and many around the world engage in. The mushers themselves are remarkable. I could stand here on the floor and talk all morning about them, but I won't.

I will highlight just a few of them. DeeDee Jonrowe, is a longtime friend of mine. She ran her 34th Iditarod this year—talk about bravery and perseverance. This is a woman who the year before last lost her father. This summer she and her husband lost everything they owned in a wildfire out in Willow, AK. The only thing that was saved were her dogs.

But she lost her sleds, her harnesses, her home, her everything. Then, just shortly after, she lost her mother. Her comment to me was this: I am going to go back on the trail so that I can just focus. That is one tough woman.

Brent Sass is a guy who captured the lead for much of the race. He is one of these guys who came to Alaska to be a homesteader, a wilderness guy. He was champion of the Yukon Quest. He rescued mushers along the way—an amazing guy. He was actually in front position last year and was disqualified because he had an iPod and was listening to music.

Along the trail, there are no electronic devices. There are pretty tough rules in the Iditarod. Can you imagine being out on a 1,000-mile trail with nobody else, and no device, no electronics for you?

Jeff King is an amazing guy, whose grit and determination has been at the forefront of this race and so many others—a multiple winner. But he was involved with a horribly tragic accident when a snow machiner, a drunk individual, literally attacked his team, killed one of his dogs and injured a couple of others.

It was extraordinarily difficult to handle that challenge—the emotion of losing a dog but also just the real tragedy and calamity of an accident like that. Jeff has finished the race in the top 10, which is remarkable.

Another remarkable feat, though, is Aly Zirkle, who finished third, and was also subject to an extreme scare by this same snow machiner—a horribly tragic side to this year's Iditarod. But there was the fact that Aly, one tough lady, came in third and persevered all the way, just getting her head into the game.

There are so many stories about these amazing men and women, but the winner of this year's Iditarod is a young man named Dallas Seavey, 29 years old. He crossed the finish line into Nome at 9:30 p.m. last night. Dallas finished in 8 days 11 hours 20 minutes 16 seconds. This is his fourth overall win, and his third consecutive win. He is only one victory away from matching the ''king'' of the Iditarod, five-time champion Rick Swenson.

Guess who was No. 2 in the Iditarod, trailing Dallas by about 45 minutes. It was his dad. Father and son finished No. 1 and No. 2 in the Iditarod. What other sport can you think of where you have a father and son competing against one another and coming in first and second? You have to go back a ways to come up with an answer to that. It was absolutely an amazing story and Alaskans watched it play out.

I had an opportunity to visit with the father of Mitch Seavey and the grandfather of Dallas Seavey. I asked: Dan, who do you predict is going to win the Iditarod this year? His response was: I don't care as long as it is a Seavey. He was right and certainly got his wish. Alaskans are proud of the men and

women who take on these extraordinary challenges, capture the attention and the fascination of the world with their feats of physical and mental endurance. The men and women of the 44th Iditarod race are to be commended and congratulated.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to express my opposition to the legislation introduced by Senator ROBERTS to preempt State labeling laws for genetically modified organisms, also known as GMOs.

The Mellman Group released a poll last year that found that 89 percent of Americans support mandatory labeling of GMOs. The calls and letters I receive from California constituents confirm widespread support for this policy. Since 2015, I have received more than 90,000 letters and emails from constituents who want a mandatory labeling standard. Since the beginning of this year, my office has received nearly 2,000 calls in favor of mandatory labeling.

Clearly, the public wants their food to be labeled in a consistent and transparent manner. However, Senator ROBERTS' proposal would preempt voter-passed mandatory GMO labeling laws in Connecticut, Maine, and Vermont. Overriding these State laws would be a step backward for consumer knowledge.

I recognize that the food industry cannot comply with 50 different State labeling laws. That is why I have cosponsored legislation introduced by Senator JEFF MERKLEY to create a consistent, transparent Federal standard on how to label foods that contain GMO ingredients. This legislation would require food producers to add a statement or symbol after the ingredient list to state that the product contains GMO ingredients. Companies would be given four options to meet the requirement.

In contrast, Senator ROBERTS' bill makes it more difficult for consumers to find out what is in their food. It requires the Department of Agriculture to create new, voluntary labeling guidance, despite the fact that the Food and Drug Administration already created voluntary guidance.

Furthermore, Senator ROBERTS' bill allows a confusing array of options for disclosure beyond labeling. This includes 1–800 numbers, Web sites, smartphone applications, and social media posts.

In my view, the only fair and consistent way to label food is on the package in a clear, straightforward, and consistent manner. Consumers do not have time to scan barcodes on food packages or to call 1–800 numbers. Consumers want the information they need to make the best choices for them and their families readily available on packaging. And I believe they deserve to have that information.

I want to make it clear that I recognize that the Federal Government and scientists agree that GMO products are safe. I also realize that California farmers may need to rely on genetic engineering to address challenges such as climate change and disease. But I do not understand why industry is so opposed to informing consumers of how their food was produced. The industry says it should only be required to label foods when there is a human health reason to do so.

However, the Federal Government has always had labeling requirements for food that aren't due to a human health reason. These requirements exist because they allow consumers to make informed choices in the marketplace. For example, the Federal Government requires juice that was made from concentrate to be labeled ''made from concentrate.'' The Federal Government requires foods processed with irradiation to be labeled as such. The Federal Government has a specific labeling requirement for what constitutes ground beef based on what parts of a cow is used, the fat content, and how it is processed.

During this election season, many Americans have expressed a view that Washington is out of touch with the rest of the country. So I want to ask, does Washington really want to overrule consumers who want GMO labeling? Does Congress know better than the majority of American consumers?

In my view, we should trust consumers and make sure they have the information they want on the food they buy. As such, I urge my colleagues to oppose Senator ROBERTS' preemption legislation. Instead, I ask my colleagues to engage in a meaningful discussion for how we can create a mandatory standard that is flexible for industry but gives consumers the information they want.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I wish to start off my remarks with regard to the bill that is before us. There is an article from The Hill newspaper, and it is quoting Julie Borlaug, who is the granddaughter of Norman Borlaug, a University of Minnesota graduate who helped to spark the green revolution in agriculture technology that is credited with saving more than 1 billion people from dying of hunger.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article from The Hill be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From The Hill, Mar. 16, 2016]

SAFE, PROVEN BIOTECHNOLOGY DESERVES NON-STIGMATIZING NATIONAL LABELING STANDARD

(By Julie Borlaug)

Global hunger is one of the most pressing challenges of the 21st century and the problem will only get worse if the U.S. Senate fails to take action and prevent a costly state-by-state patchwork of labeling mandates for food containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

In a Senate Agriculture Committee markup last week, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) correctly noted that ''science is an essential piece of the puzzle in addressing food insecurity.'' The senator also praised the legacy of my grandfather, Dr. Norman Borlaug, a University of Minnesota graduate who helped spark the green revolution in agricultural technology that is credited with saving more than 1 billion people from dying of hunger.

I am glad to see my grandfather's work praised. And, as an associate director for the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture, I want to see his work, and the work of his fellow agricultural scientists, protected. That means ensuring that innovations in agricultural biotechnology aren't sent to the dustbin of history, leaving future generations asking why good solutions were abandoned.

It really comes down to a simple label. In July, Vermont is set to become the first state to begin enforcing a GMO labeling mandate. The impacts will be felt on store shelves and in science labs around this country. Make no mistake—these state labeling efforts are not about a so-called 'right to know' but are about enabling activists to drive GMOs out of the marketplace. Leaders in the labeling movement acknowledge this, with one saying ''If we have it labeled, then we can organize people not to buy it.''

These dangerous efforts undermine the critical importance of biotechnology and the role it plays in feeding the world. With the help of modern science and GMOs, farmers now have the ability to produce crops that better withstand droughts and require fewer pesticides. They can adapt genetic codes to acclimate to new environments, and ensure that crops grow well despite inhospitable climates.

You cannot be anti-hunger and be anti-GMO. GMOs not only make farming more sustainable, they directly impact national and global food security at a time when warming temperatures and rising populations mean that those living in poverty will face increasingly unstable supplies of food.

The safety of GMOs is as clear as their benefits. Every major scientific organization that has examined this issue has concluded that they are safe as any other food. Those denying their safety are denying the science.

By allowing state-mandated on package labeling of GMO foods, Congress would be turning its back on decades of advancements in biotechnology and allowing a small group of activists to deny millions of people the tools that will prevent starvation and death. We cannot allow that to happen.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R–Kan.) has put forward a bipartisan proposal that would establish national standards for food made with genetically-engineered ingredients. The Biotech Labeling Solutions Act would prevent a costly state-by-state patchwork of labeling mandates. It would also help ensure that providing greater information could go hand-in-hand with providing greater education at a national level about the safety and importance of GMO crops. The Senate Agriculture Committee supported moving his bill to the full Senate by a 14–6 bipartisan vote.

Now, we need senators of both parties to come together to support this common-sense approach.

Sixteen years ago, my grandfather wrote that the world would soon have the agricultural technologies available to feed the 8.3 billion people anticipated in the next quarter of a century. The more pertinent question is whether farmers and ranchers will be permitted to use these technologies.

The members of the Senate will decide that very question in their votes on the Biotech Labeling Solutions Act. For the sake of science and the world, the answer needs to be yes.

Mr. ROBERTS. Quoting from the article, Ms. Borlaug said:

I am glad to see my grandfather's work praised. . . . Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts . . . has put forward a bipartisan proposal that would establish national standards for food made with genetically-engineered ingredients. The Biotech Labeling Solutions Act would prevent a costly state-by-state patchwork of labeling mandates. It would also help ensure that providing greater information could go hand-in-hand with providing greater education at a national level about the safety and importance of GMO crops. . . . Sixteen years ago, my grandfather wrote that the world would soon have the agriculture technologies available to feed the 8.3 billion people anticipated in the next quarter of a century. The more pertinent question is whether farmers and ranchers will be permitted to use these technologies.

I rise again to discuss my amendment numbered 3450 on biotechnology labeling solutions. There has been a lot of discussion about this amendment and this topic in general. That is a good thing. We should be talking about our food, we should be talking about our farmers and producers, and we should be talking about our consumers as well. It is important—extremely important—to have an honest discussion and an open exchange with dialogue. After all, that is what we do in the Senate or at least that is what we are supposed to do. We are here to discuss difficult issues, craft compromised solutions, and finally vote in the best interest of our constituents. That is what we are doing here today: exercising our responsibility to cast a vote for what is in the best interest of those who sent us here.

Let's start with discussing difficult issues. The basic issue at hand is agriculture biotechnology labeling. If you have heard any of my previous remarks, you have heard me say time and time and time again that biotechnology products are safe, but you don't have to take my word for it. The Agriculture Committee held a hearing late last year where all three agencies in charge of reviewing biotechnology testified before our members. Over and over again the EPA, the FDA, and the USDA told us that these products are safe—safe for the environment, safe for other plants, and safe for our food supply. This is the gold standard on what is safe with regard to agriculture biotechnology. Not only are these products safe, but they also provide benefits to the entire value chain from producer to consumer. Through biotechnology, our farmers are able to grow more on less land using less water, less fuel, and less fertilizer, but the difficult issue we are debating today is about more than recognizing the fact that biotechnology is safe. No, today our decision is about whether to prevent a wrecking ball from hitting our entire food supply chain. The difficult issue for us to address is what to do about the patchwork of biotechnology labeling laws that will soon wreak havoc on the flow of interstate commerce, agriculture, and food products in every supermarket and every grocery store up and down Main Street of every community in America. That is what this is about. It is not about safety, it is not about health, and it is not about nutrition. It is all about marketing.

What we face today is a handful of States that have chosen to enact labeling requirements on information that has nothing to do with health, safety, or nutrition. Unfortunately, the impact of these decisions will be felt all across the country. Those decisions impact the farmers in the fields who would be pressured to grow less efficient crops so manufacturers could avoid these demonizing labels. Those labeling laws will impact distributors who have to spend more money to sort different labels for different States. Those labeling laws will ultimately impact consumers who will suffer from higher priced food. It will cost $1,050 per year for an average family of four. That is right. If we do nothing, it is not manufacturers that will pay the ultimate price, it is the consumer.

A study released this year found that changes in the production or labeling of most of the Nation's food supply for a single State would impact citizens in each of our home States. The total annual increased cost of doing nothing today, such as not voting for cloture, could be as much as $82 billion every year. That is a pretty costly cloture vote. That is 1,050 bucks tacked onto each family's grocery bill, and that is a direct hit to their pocketbooks. Let me repeat that. If we fail to act today—if we do not have cloture and get to this compromise bill—the cost to consumers would total as much as $82 billion a year or 1,050 bucks for hard-working American families. I don't think that is what my colleagues want. I don't think they want to be responsible for that: a cloture vote with an $82 billion price tag? Come on.

This is the difficult issue we must address and the question is, How do we fix it? That is why we have crafted a compromise solution and put it on the floor for debate and action. The amendment before us today stops this wrecking ball before any more damage can be done.

Two weeks ago, the Agriculture Committee passed a bill with a bipartisan vote of 14 to 6. I am very proud of that legislation. It stopped the State-by-State patchwork and provided a national voluntary standard for biotechnology food products. For the first time, the Federal Government would set a science-based standard allowing consumers to demand the marketplace provide more information. Consumers are growing more and more interested in their food, and that is a good thing. We, as consumers, should learn more about where our food comes from and what it takes to keep our food supply the safest, the most abundant, and the most affordable in the world. However, the role of government in this space is to ensure that information regarding safety, health, and nutritional value are expressed directly to consumers, but the information in question today has nothing to do with safety or health or nutrition, so the responsibility and opportunity to inform the consumers falls on the marketplace. If consumers want more information, they demand it by voting with their pocketbooks in the aisles of the grocery store.

As our bipartisan bill has come to the floor, I have heard concerns that this voluntary standard is not enough for our consumers. Yet again we worked with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. The legislation before us goes further than the committee-passed bill. This legislation addresses concerns with a voluntary-only approach by providing an incentive for the marketplace to provide consumers with more information.

To my friends on this side of the aisle, this legislation allows the market to work. To my friends on that side of the aisle, if the marketplace does not live up to their commitments, if information is not made available to consumers, then this legislation holds the markets accountable by instituting a mandatory standard. It is not just any mandatory standard, it is a standard that provides the same options and mechanisms for compliance as outlined and stated publicly by our Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack.

Simply put, the legislation before us provides us an immediate and comprehensive solution to the unworkable State-by-State patchwork labeling laws. As chairman of the sometimes powerful Senate Agriculture Committee, I believe this is a true compromise. Like any bill, it is not perfect, and I know that, but to those who criticize this legislation in one breath and say they want a compromise in the next breath, I ask: Where is your plan? Where is your solution? We have heard the distinguished Senator from Oregon many times on this floor—not a stranger to this floor—criticizing this compromise. I appreciate, and I am sure we all appreciate, his passion. I disagree with his views, but I appreciate that he did put his plan into a bill and put it out for public debate. What I don't understand is why he doesn't want to vote on it. Why would you put a bill out there and decide not to vote on it? Why would you not vote for cloture so you can get to a vote on your bill? We could have voted on his legislation today. Yet when he was presented with the option to take a vote, he declined. I have read the press release where he described the compromise as maintaining the status quo.

If the truth be known, this compromise achieves just the opposite. In fact, voting no today is the only way that maintains the status quo. Voting no today does nothing to stop the wrecking ball. Voting no today ensures that the instability in the marketplace continues. Voting no today puts farmers and all of agriculture at risk. Voting no today negatively impacts the

daily lives of everybody in the food chain from the farmer who will be forced to plant fence row to fence row of a crop that is less efficient to the grain elevator that will have to adjust storage options to separate the types of grain, to the manufacturer that will need different labels for different States, to the distributor that will need expanded storage for sorting, and to the retailer who may be unable to afford offering low-cost, private-label products, and, finally, to the consumer who will be forced to pay for all this additional cost to the tune of $82 billion.

Now we come to our final task as elected officials of this body taking a vote. But before we do, we should all know that never before—never before in my experience as chairman of the House Agriculture Committee and chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and all the years I have had the privilege to serve on both committees—we have never seen a bill in the Agricultural Committee with so much support, never. Over 800 organizations all across the food and agriculture perspective have a stake in this bill. It is at the national and State and local levels. They all support the bill. The bill has the support of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, the American Farm Bureau, and many, many more.

Virtually every farm group is in town. I just talked to the American Soybean Association this past week. One farmer said: Hey, if I cannot have agriculture biological crops with regard to increasing the yield that I plant, what am I going to do? Am I going to plant fence row to fence row? Am I going to lose in this situation when farming income is declining and farm credit is getting tighter?

The fundamental role of the Agriculture Committee is to protect American farmers and ranchers who provide a safe, abundant, and affordable food supply to a very troubled and hungry world. So I will be voting yes to do just that, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same. Voting no today means telling your constituents next week that you are raising their grocery bill by over $1,000. Good luck with that.

It is a pretty simple vote. You are either for agriculture or you are not.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, later this morning we continue to work on whether to consider a food labeling bill here in the Senate. As a dad, I know this bill is about much more than just words or symbols or a label. It is about the confidence we have in the food we eat and the food we feed our children. As a Hoosier, I also know this bill is about preserving confidence in a long and proud Indiana tradition of growing the food that feeds our communities and provides a safe and reliable food supply for the world. Whether you are a parent or a farmer, a Republican or a Democrat, our objectives in this debate should be the same: to provide consumers with access to accurate information about the food we eat and to do so in a way that does not mislead consumers into falsely thinking their food is unsafe.

I believe strongly that consumers, our families, our kids, moms and dads, brothers and sisters deserve to feel confident in the food we feed our families. I want to know how much sugar is in my ice cream and how many calories are in that roast beef sandwich that I love so much. It is clear from this debate that many Americans want to know even more about where and how our food is produced. I believe we should have that information, and it should be easy to find.

It is also common sense. This information should be delivered in a way that is fair, that is objective, and that is based in sound science. I have heard from many Hoosier farmers who are very concerned that some labels or symbols on packages would amount, in consumers' minds, to warning labels and could send a misleading message that the safe and healthy products our farmers grow—think of sweet corn in our fields—are somehow unhealthy or even dangerous.

This morning, my good friend, Senator TOM CARPER from Delaware, and I filed an amendment that builds off the framework of the proposal before us today. A framework I first suggested in the Agriculture Committee markup of this very bill. It creates a national voluntary bioengineered food labeling standard. It stipulates that if food companies fail to make sufficient information available, then a national food labeling standard for bioengineering becomes mandatory.

Our amendment works for farmers, it works for manufacturers, and it works for our families. It establishes ambitious goals for the availability of information related to bioengineering by requiring that after 3 years, 80 percent of the food products covered by the legislation would provide direct access to information. If the food industry does not meet this threshold, then the labeling requirement becomes mandatory.

Our amendment also requires clear and direct access to information on bioengineering. This could include explicit disclosures, such as organic or GMO-free, or voluntarily disclosing bioengineering on the box. Or companies choosing to participate in the voluntary program could use various electronic methods of disclosure, such as a Web site or a QR code in conjunction with a phone number that clearly indicates to consumers—to our families—where they can find more information and provides direct access to that information. This is important because our shared goal is to provide direct access to information about the contents of our food to everyone, whether you have access to the Internet or a smartphone or a regular phone. So let me repeat: Our amendment allows for electronic disclosure to be used only in conjunction with a phone number, and both methods would have to provide direct access to information on the product's contents.

Finally, our amendment preserves State consumer protection laws and remedies. States write laws to protect our citizens from mislabeled products and to provide for remedies in case of false or misleading statements. Our amendment preserves those laws.

Consumers, our families, farmers, and food producers are looking to the Senate for leadership. After months of discussion, we have been unable to agree yet on a proposal that gives consumers the information they want in a responsible way, but the issue remains. This will be another week of uncertainty for producers, for manufacturers, for our families who do not have the information they want, and for the producers and manufacturers I mentioned who don't know what is expected.

I am going to continue to work on this issue with Senator ROBERTS and Senator STABENOW. I strongly encourage all my colleagues to consider the ideas that Senator CARPER and I have put forward and to try to work with us to find a solution that works for America.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

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

I am rising to speak to this issue from a simple American citizen point of view. The American citizen wants the right to know what is in their food. They want to know how many calories; they want to know what the minerals and the vitamins are and what the ingredients are. It is a simple standard because it is important to an individual to know what you are putting in your mouth, what you are putting on the table for your families and your children.

This is a principle that we have honored time and again on our packages. We proceeded to put on our packages whether fish is farm raised or wild caught because citizens wanted to know. It makes a difference to them. It is their choice. It is their judgment. We put on our packages whether juice is from concentrate or is fresh because citizens wanted to know. It is important to them. It is their right to know.

We put the list of ingredients on the package in a simple format, not so that someone can spend an hour trying to research what is in it. No, we have a simple 1-second test. You pick up the food off the counter, you turn it over, you look at the list of ingredients and you say, this has the vitamin C I wanted; this has the calories I wanted—the 1-second test.

That is what is at stake because the bill that is before us right now kills the 1-second test. It kills immediate access to information for consumers. It says

we are going to eviscerate States' rights to respond to this desire of citizens to know what is in their food. This is a desire that stretches all across the United States, all genders, all ages, all parties. In fact, 9 out of 10 Americans say they want this simple information on the package to meet this 1-second test just like calories.

Now here we are in this deeply divided Nation, this Nation in which we see in this Presidential campaign extremes to the left and the right and everything in between, and we wonder what is happening. Isn't there anything we can agree on?

Well, the fascinating thing is that here is something we can agree on: 80-plus percent in every category—Republicans, Democrats, Independents—almost all of them near the 9-out-of-10 factor, women over 80 percent, men over 80 percent, young over 80 percent, old over 80 percent. In other words, all of those are between 80 and 90 percent no matter who you are, where you are, what your gender is, or how old you are. Nine out of ten Americans want to know what is in their food, and they want it easily accessible on the package.

My colleague talked about direct access to information. In this case, ''direct access'' is somewhat of a term subject to interpretation because to the consumer, direct access is the 1-second test. I pick up the package, I flip it over, 390 calories, thank you very much. Done. But the term today is being used for indirect access.

Let's look at these different hall-of-mirrors proposals that are being put forward. OK. Sham No. 1 is the 800 number, an 800 number on the package. What is the purpose of that 800 number? The package doesn't say. There are 800 numbers on all kinds of packages. You call up the company and complain because there is contamination in your frozen peas. What is the purpose of it? Is it so you can call the company and ask about new products coming out? Without any information around it, it is just a number. And citizens don't just go to a product and call a number. Why? Because they are busy. They are going down the grocery store aisle. They have a supermarket cart. They have a child in there. They want the 1-second test. They don't want to be told they have to call a call center and get in a phone tree and press a bunch of buttons, and then a message comes on and says: I am sorry, due to high call volume, we will get to you in maybe 20 minutes, but stay on the line and we will play sweet music for you. And maybe—if you stay on the line long enough—maybe it is not 20 minutes; maybe it is an hour. You get someone in a call center overseas who is saying things in an accent you can't understand. Citizens hate that. And they hate pretend, false solutions. This does not mean direct access to information. This is direct: It is in my hand, 1 second. I see it. That is direct.

Now there is another idea. It is called a QR code, or quick response code—quick response, computer code. Why is this on the package? No explanation. So is putting something with no explanation on a package helpful to consumers? No. Is it there so you can scan it when you check out to see what the price is? Is it there to find out about new products that are coming out from this company? Is it there because you might possibly find out information about discounts? You have no idea. There is no explanation. And when you use that code, you give up personal information. So you have to have a phone. You have to have a smartphone. You have to have a data plan. You have to give up your privacy. And there is no explanation why you would even bother to go to it. That is completely misleading. That is why I call it the hall of mirrors. It is like you are at a circus. We have an 800 number, we have a QR code, no real information, no direct access to information.

Let's be honest with the American public. Nine out of ten Americans want this information presented in a simple format. A nationwide poll that was done in November did a followup question: Would you prefer for it to be simply stated on the package or have a QR code? Again, 9 out of 10 said they wanted a direct statement on the package.

Look how much room this takes up. Isn't it a lot simpler just to put a little symbol on there? That is all people want. They are not asking for anything that takes up room or costs anything, just like it doesn't cost anything to put another ingredient on your package if you add it to your ingredient list. Labels are changed all the time.

I met with industry, and they said: Here are our top three priorities.

Priority No. 1 is, we want a single national standard so we don't have conflicting State standards.

OK. That is understandable. We are on the verge of having that. In July we would have one State with a standard. There is nothing on the horizon for two States. There are several States that have said: If a whole bunch of States sign up, we will do something collectively. But certainly we are not at risk in the months ahead of more than one State standard, so there is no emergency here. But I agree with the underlying principle that, indeed, when it comes to labels, a warehouse shouldn't have to worry about whether it is shipping product to one subdivision of the State or another subdivision of the State or one State versus another State. So one standard is reasonable.

The second thing they said is, we don't want anything on the front of the package because that might imply there is something wrong with the food.

OK. Fair enough.

The third thing they said is, we don't want anything pejorative.

Fair enough. Have the FDA select a symbol to put on the package.

We could solve this whole debate immediately for those who want to put on a QR code and just say: Scan this code for GE ingredients in this product. OK. Now the consumer gets the 1-second test. They look at it and see there are GE ingredients, and that is all they want to know. They don't want to scan it and give up their privacy, and they don't want to have to go to the Web site and look up the product, where information would probably be misleading anyway. So that is fair enough.

Now, there is a third idea that has been put forward, a third thing that is supposed to count as answering customer inquiries, and that is in this bill—to put information on social media. This triples the size of the house of mirrors. A consumer goes to look at the product to see if it has a code. No. Does it have an 800 number? No. Oh, there is this social media thing. Well, we all know there are over 100 companies doing different types of social media. We know the famous ones. We know Facebook and Instagram and Twitter. So where on their social media did this company put that information? Well, now you really have to be a detective. You could spend hundreds of hours trying to figure out the answer to that.

So the 800 number is phony, the QR code is a scam, and this whole social media thing is a sham.

All citizens want is for us to be honest with them about the ingredients. That is all they are asking for. It is not very much. Scientific studies point to the benefits of some genetic engineering, and they point to problems that have arisen from some genetic engineering. It should be up to the citizen. The citizen has the right to know.

In this age where we are so divided, we have one thing in common, and that is that 90 percent of our citizens—whether from the Presiding Officer's State or any of the States represented by Senators in this distinguished Hall, 90 percent of the citizens want a simple indication on the package. So why today are so many Senators coming to this floor saying they don't care about what their citizens feel? They don't care about their citizens' rights, and they don't care about States' rights.

I have heard so many colleagues who are planning to vote for this sham and scam today come to this floor and talk about the beauty of States as a laboratory for ideas. Well, now, here is Vermont. Vermont has said: We will step up. We will be the laboratory. We will be the first standard and experiment in putting simple information on the package.

Before we make any decision, the rest of the Nation gets the advantage to observe that State laboratory and then to say: Is it working or is it not working? Are there problems being created? How can it be improved? Do we want this as a model for the Nation for a single standard, or do we say that we absolutely don't want it as a model for the Nation?

Well, many of my colleagues here plan to crush the State laboratory. They have given fancy speeches about

States' rights, but they are coming down today to vote to crush States' rights to respond to a fundamental concern of their citizens.

I must say I like the idea of the State laboratory and to see what one State does, but I also understand the underlying concern that in short order there might be multiple States and conflicting standards, and that is not a functioning situation for interstate commerce.

So if we take away the right for a State to give the 1-second test for direct information—1 second—turn over the package; there are 880 calories. That is the test. Turn over the package. GE ingredients are present. Thank you. That is the 1-second test. If we are going to crush the ability of a State to respond to a fundamental concern of its citizens, then we need to provide the same basic provision not in a scary fashion and not in a fashion that takes up space on the package, not on the front of the package; one standard for the entire United States, but it has to meet that test. That is all. It is a simple, fair exchange.

So today I urge my colleagues to vote against cloture because this bill is among the worst bills I have ever seen on the floor of the Senate. It is without good justification, without resolving the issue at hand, crushing States' rights, taking away citizens' right to know, and putting out three phony scam, sham alternatives. That is a very sad state of affairs.

Another sad state of affairs is that this bill is on this floor having not gone through committee. We have heard a lot of pontificating about good process in the Senate and how we were going to have good process, but here is a bill written entirely outside the halls of the committee, never considered in the committee, and here it is on the floor. Such an important issue would merit substantial debate. Such an important issue would merit a full and free amendment process.

But two things happened immediately after this bill was introduced. The first is that the majority leader immediately filed cloture; that is, to close debate. So before one word—not one word had been said on this bill because no one was able to speak between the bill being put on the floor and cloture. Oh, hey, I just filed the bill, and I am closing debate. That is not a fair and open process. Then the tree was filled, so no one can put an amendment forward. On such an important issue, that is not a situation that is acceptable.

Furthermore, this was deftly timed to occur simultaneously with the five big primaries yesterday. So this is a moment where the American people are paying attention to Florida, they are paying attention to Illinois, and they want to know what happened in Missouri. They want to know what occurred in these five States. The press is paying attention to that. That is the one day of debate allowed before this cloture motion is voted on.

So let's take this bill and put it in committee and actually have a committee process to consider it. Then bring it back to the floor with whatever changes the committee makes, and hopefully the committee would honor the fundamental right to know by consumers. Bring the bill back to the floor and have a full and open amendment process on something so important to citizens. But do not crush States' rights. Do not steal consumers' right to know and try to do it in the dark of night while the Nation is distracted by major primaries. It is wrong on policy, it is wrong on process, and it is an injustice to every citizen in our Nation.

Here is the situation: The Nation is very cynical about this body. This body here, they say, isn't responding to the concerns of the American citizens. Is there any single bill that has been more an example to justify that cynicism than this bill which is before us right now? When 9 out of 10 Americans say this is important to them, the majority of this body says: We don't care. When 9 out of 10—or roughly that number—Democrats and Republicans and Independents all agree on something, this body says: We don't care. Isn't the cynicism of the American citizens justified?

Here is the thing: Our Nation was founded on a simple principle. That principle is embodied by three beautiful words in the beginning of our Constitution: ''We the People.'' Well, we the people want simple information on the package. So if we are here to honor that principle, why is this bill before us, I ask my colleagues. Why a bill that says the interests of a few titans in crushing a State laboratory is more important than the views of 90 percent of Americans? And when those Americans are asked, more than 7 out of 10 say this is very important to them, so this isn't one of those casual issues. Why is it so important? Because this is food they put in their mouths and on their table, and even if they have no concerns about the GE product itself, they feel they have a right to know.

So let's return to the principles on which this Nation was founded. Let's quit feeding the cynicism of citizens across this Nation who see these powerful special interests doing the opposite of what citizens ask for. Let's be a Chamber that honors our relationship with our constituents, not one that tries to stomp out their rights. Let's not allow debate to close on this bill. Let's send it back to committee. Let's have a committee process. Let's have a floor debate in the future, with full and free amendments, on an issue so important to our States and so important to our citizens.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I am going to proceed on my leader time.

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

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the next Justice could fundamentally alter the direction of the Supreme Court and have a profound impact on our country, so of course—of course the American people should have a say in the Court's direction.

It is a President's constitutional right to nominate a Supreme Court Justice, and it is the Senate's constitutional right to act as a check on a President and withhold its consent.

As Chairman GRASSLEY and I declared weeks ago and reiterated personally to President Obama, the Senate will continue to observe the Biden rule so that the American people have a voice in this momentous decision. The American people may well elect a President who decides to nominate Judge Garland for Senate consideration. The next President may also nominate somebody very different. Either way, our view is this: Give the people a voice in filling this vacancy.

Let me remind colleagues of what Vice President BIDEN said when he was chairman of the Judiciary Committee here in the Senate. Here is what he said:

> It would be our pragmatic conclusion that once the political season is underway, and it is, action on a Supreme Court nomination must be put off until after the election campaign is over. That is what is fair to the nominee and is central to the process. Otherwise, it seems to me . . . we will be in deep trouble as an institution.

Chairman BIDEN went on.

> Others may fret that this approach would leave the Court with only eight members for some time, but as I see it . . . the cost of such a result—the need to reargue three or four cases that will divide the Justices four to four—are quite minor compared to the cost that a nominee, the President, the Senate, and the Nation would have to pay for what would assuredly be a bitter fight, no matter how good a person is nominated by the President.

That was Chairman JOE BIDEN.

Consider that last part. Then-Senator BIDEN said that the cost to the Nation would be too great no matter who the President nominates. President Obama and his allies may now try to pretend this disagreement is about a person, but as I just noted, his own Vice President made clear it is not. The Biden rule reminds us that the decision the Senate announced weeks ago remains about a principle and not a person—about a principle and not a person.

It seems clear that President Obama made this nomination not with the intent of seeing the nominee confirmed but in order to politicize it for purposes of the election—which is the type of thing then-Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman BIDEN was concerned about. It is the exact same thing Chairman BIDEN was concerned about. The Biden rule underlines that what the President has done with this nomination would be unfair to any nominee, and, more importantly, the rule warns of the great costs the President's action could carry for our Nation.

Americans are certain to hear a lot of rhetoric from the other side in the coming days, but here are the facts they should keep in mind. The current Democratic leader said the Senate is not a rubberstamp, and he noted that the Constitution does not require the Senate to give Presidential nominees a vote. That is the current Democratic leader. The incoming Democratic leader did not even wait until the final year of George W. Bush's term to essentially tell the Senate not to consider any Supreme Court nominee the President sent. The Biden rule supports what the Senate is doing today, underlining that what we are talking about is a principle and not a person.

So here is our view. Instead of spending more time debating an issue where we can't agree, let's keep working to address the issues where we can. We just passed critical bipartisan legislation to help address the heroin and prescription opioid crisis in our country. Let's build on that success. Let's keep working together to get our economy moving again and to make our country safer, rather than endlessly debating an issue where we don't agree. As we continue working on issues like these, the American people are perfectly capable of having their say on this issue. So let's give them a voice. Let's let the American people decide. The Senate will appropriately revisit the matter when it considers the qualifications of the nominee the next President nominates, whoever that might be.

I yield the floor.

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 legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment with an amendment to S. 764, a bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Rounds, John Barrasso, Deb Fischer, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Crapo, Johnny Isakson, John Cornyn, Pat Roberts, Orrin G. Hatch, Richard Burr, James M. Inhofe, Jeff Flake, Tim Scott, Cory Gardner, Shelley Moore Capito.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 764, with amendment No. 3450, offered by the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. MCCONNELL, 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 Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 48, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 37 Leg.]

YEAS—48

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

NAYS—49

Baldwin	Hirono	Paul
Bennet	Kaine	Peters
Blumenthal	King	Reed
Booker	Klobuchar	Reid
Boxer	Leahy	Schatz
Brown	Lee	Schumer
Cantwell	Manchin	Shaheen
Cardin	Markey	Stabenow
Casey	McCaskill	Sullivan
Collins	McConnell	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Feinstein	Mikulski	Warren
Franken	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden
Heinrich	Murray	
Heller	Nelson	

NOT VOTING—3

Cruz	Rubio	Sanders

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 48, the nays are 49.

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

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

The Senator from Texas.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as the world now knows, this morning President Obama nominated his choice to fill the vacant seat created by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. In doing so, the President exercised his unquestioned authority under the Constitution to nominate somebody to this vacancy, but that same Constitution reserves to the U.S. Senate—and the U.S. Senate alone—the right to either grant or withhold consent to that nominee. It is the same Constitution. They can't argue that the President somehow has an unquestioned right to see his nominee rubberstamped by the Senate and still show fidelity and honor to the same Constitution that gives him that authority to make that nomination.

At this time, I reaffirm my commitment to share with other members of our conference that the President—this President—will not fill this vacancy. The Senate will not confirm this nominee to this vacancy. In so doing, we will follow the same rule book that Democrats have advocated for in the past. It can't be that one set of rules apply to a Democratic President and a second set of rules apply when there is a Republican President. This isn't just about speculating what Democrats might do were the shoe on the other foot and we had a Republican President because they have told us what they would do—they have done this since 1992—and in many ways they have kept their promise.

There is a lot at stake. Justice Scalia served for 30 years on the U.S. Supreme Court. The next Justice could well change the ideological makeup and the balance of the Supreme Court for a generation to come and fundamentally reshape America as we know it.

At this critical juncture in our Nation's history, and particularly with regard to the judiciary and the highest Court in the land, the American people deserve a chance to have a say in the selection of the next lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court, and the only way to empower the American people and ensure they have that voice is for the next President to fill the nomination created by this vacancy.

I have heard some people say that we had that election in 2012, when President Obama was elected, but I would say that you are half right. We also had another election in 2014, where the American people gave Republicans a majority in the U.S. Senate because they saw what happened when this President didn't have any checks and balances. We saw this during the beginning of his term of office when ObamaCare was passed by a purely partisan vote. We saw it when Dodd-Frank was passed—again, by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote. So, in 2014, the American people said to President Obama: We want an effective check on Presidential power—and that is what the American people got.

We can't just look at the one side of the equation—the President's authority under the Constitution—and the fact that the President was reelected in 2012. We have to look at what happened in 2014 and the constitutional prerogative of the U.S. Senate either to grant or to withhold the confirmation.

OUR NATIONAL DEBT

Madam President, later today the Judiciary Committee will be holding a hearing addressing America's impending fiscal crisis, including some potential solutions to help reverse the unsustainable course we are on. I know we don't hear very much about it here in Washington. This seems to be ''people walking by the graveyard,'' so to speak, regarding the fact that our national debt hit $19 trillion for the first time ever. This means our debt climbed more than $1 trillion in a little over a year. In fact, this is a shocking statistic that we will not read about in most of the mainstream media. The national debt has roughly doubled—

roughly doubled—since President Obama took office a little over 7 years ago.

The Congressional Budget Office projects that for the fiscal year 2016, spending will reach $3.9 trillion, an increase of $232 billion from the previous year. I know that when we are talking about trillions and billions of dollars, it boggles the imagination. Most of us can't even conceive of numbers that large, but the fact is, when you borrow money, you have to pay it back at some point. Frankly, what I worry most about is that my generation is not going to be the one to repay the money we borrow. It is going to be the next generation. I know a lot of parents and grandparents worry about whether the American dream will still be alive and available to the next generation and beyond. This is a huge moral lapse on the part of the current generation, to not pay our own debts and to not come up with a system or a framework by which to begin that process.

Rather than addressing this problem head on, government spending is set to remain high over the coming decade, even with the discretionary spending caps and sequester put in place by the Budget Control Act. Inside the beltway, people talk a lot about sequester and the Budget Control Act, but that is only 30 percent of Federal spending. Seventy percent of Federal spending is on autopilot, growing in some cases by a rate of 70 percent or more a year. Not addressing this is irresponsible, it is dangerous, and it also limits the choices available were our country to become embroiled in another fiscal crisis like we saw in 2008.

If we ask our national security experts—former Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff ADM Mike Mullen said the No. 1 security threat to the United States was the debt. That shocked me a little bit when I heard him say that, but what he meant—and I know it to be true—is that more and more of the tax dollars the Federal Government receives are going to be paid to the bondholders who own that debt—the Chinese and other people around the world. We have to pay the interest on the debt if we are going to borrow the money, but more and more the spending decisions will be taken out of the hands of the elected representatives of the American people and simply be left up to the accountants who say: OK. You have accrued this much debt. Here is the interest that needs to be paid on that debt to the bondholders, and there is not going to be enough money left over to protect the national security of the United States of America.

We have already seen our military on a dangerous trajectory potentially leading to the smallest Army since World War II. We tried to deal with some of that just last fall to begin to reverse some of this because frankly this was no longer a matter of just cutting superficial cuts. These were into the muscle and the bone of what makes up our national security structure, and we know what happened too. Our friends on the other side said: If you want to spend more money to protect this country with national security spending, then we are going to demand dollar-for-dollar more spending on nondefense, discretionary spending. That is why we ended up with the deal we ended up with.

I have found it very frustrating in my time in the Senate how many of our colleagues will talk about this issue, but I have to be honest, the ones who frustrate me the most are the ones who will not talk about it at all, to even acknowledge the fact. We need to have a conversation, and more than that we need to have a commitment and we need to have a goal when it comes to dealing with this national debt and runaway spending.

Our Democratic friends apparently share the same philosophy as the current President to create a tax-and-spend agenda without considering the long-term ramifications to job creation, the economy, not to mention our children and grandchildren. I am glad to say this side of the aisle has tried to do what I described earlier, which is to take a responsible position on embracing a policy which would help us to pay down the debt, deal with this in a fiscally responsible way, and allow us to get our books back in good order.

We are going to take up this matter before the Senate Judiciary Committee today. We will be discussing reining in spending and making progress on the debt, including an amendment to the United States Constitution that would require a balanced budget.

I can hear it now—because I have heard it before—some of our colleagues across the aisle saying: Heaven forbid. We can't amend the Constitution. Well, we have done it 27 times. Now, we don't do it willy-nilly. We don't do it for small things, but for something like this, it may well be required. Frankly, this is one of the most important lessons of economics that all of us who have children have tried to teach our children, which is you don't spend money that you don't have—well, I guess, unless you are the Federal Government and you can print it or you can borrow it, but at some point the birds come home to roost.

Of course, our commitment to commonsense spending goes far beyond today's hearing on the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. Many will recall that folks on this side of the aisle highlighted gimmicks in the discretionary budget process that only hide the real cost and don't actually reduce spending. There are a lot of shell games that go on here in Washington, DC. I am glad our budget amendment last year focused on bringing stunts like those to an end and placed a limit on their use in the appropriations process.

Most recently, we used reconciliation through the budget process to keep our promise to vote to repeal ObamaCare—a law that has been burdening American families and businesses with higher taxes and mandates, while failing to contain premiums and financial losses on the exchanges. But instead of offering solutions to our growing debt, many of our Democratic colleagues are content to sit back and criticize those of us who are trying to come up with a solution to address this problem: how to safeguard our Nation's fiscal health. They argue that a balanced budget amendment isn't feasible or that certain government programs are so essential that we have to up their funding at the expense of the taxpayer, or they act as if the debt isn't a problem, or if it is a problem, that all they will do is raise taxes enough to try to balance the budget. You can't do that. You cannot raise taxes high enough on the American people to pay off $19 trillion in debt. Those aren't solutions; those are talking points. They don't help the American people make ends meet, and they don't help the U.S. Government live within its means.

So I would like to ask, what are the Democratic solutions to our national debt? We are going to ask that question this afternoon. We are going to have some expert witnesses offer a number of suggestions. Then we are going to ask our friends across the aisle, what is your solution? I hope we hear more than just crickets or criticism that what we are proposing simply will not work.

I know my colleagues and I would welcome constructive input and serious, good-faith proposals to stem the burgeoning national debt, but until then, our friends across the aisle need to do more than sit on their hands or just whistle past the graveyard of this impending national disaster.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I appreciate the comments of my distinguished colleague from Texas. As usual, he is right on and one of the great leaders on trying to balance the budget through a constitutional amendment. I personally appreciate his efforts and his expertise in doing that.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Madam President, on a different subject, I rise today to speak about the need for the Senate to do its job regarding the Supreme Court vacancy created by the untimely death of Justice Antonin Scalia.

The Constitution gives to the President the power to nominate Supreme Court Justices, and President Obama has exercised that power by nominating Judge Merrick Garland. The Constitution gives to the Senate the power of advice and consent, and it is time for the Senate to do its job.

The sound bite ''do your job'' is catchy, quotable, and short enough to fit in very large letters on a large chart that Democratic Senators bring to this floor. Rarely, however, have so few words been so misleading for so many.

This cliché begs but does not answer the most important question: What is the Senate's job regarding the Scalia vacancy? When Democrats and their liberal allies say ''Do your job,'' they really mean ''Do as we say now, not as we did then.'' Saying that would be more honest, but then no one else would be persuaded by it. So they say that the Constitution provides the Senate's job description, requiring a prompt Judiciary Committee hearing and a timely floor vote. There may be a constitution somewhere that says such a thing, but it is certainly not in our Constitution—the Constitution of the United States—that each of us has sworn an oath to support and defend.

In a way, I am not surprised that liberals would use a made-up, fictional constitution to pursue their political goal. After all, they favor judges who do the same thing. From the time he was a Senator serving in this body, President Obama has said that judges decide cases based on their personal empathy, core concerns, and vision of how the world works. My goodness. If that were the case, any philosopher could be a Supreme Court Justice. He has nominated men and women who believe that judges may change the Constitution's meaning based on things such as cultural understandings and evolving social norms. Give me a break.

The kinds of judges liberals favor see unwritten things in our written Constitution. They discover things between the lines of our written charter that come not from those who drafted and ratified the Constitution, not from the American people, but from the judges' own imaginations.

If the Constitution we have—the one our fellow citizens can read—suits them, then activist judges will use it. If not, then activist judges will make up a new constitution that is more useful to their purposes. America's Founders fashioned a system of government with built-in limits, including a defined role for unelected judges. The Supreme Court observed in the famous case of Marbury v. Madison that the Constitution is written down so that these limits will be neither mistaken nor forgotten and is intended to govern courts as much as legislatures. The activist judges whom liberals favor reject those limits. They look at written law such as the Constitution and statutes merely as a starting point, as words without any real meaning. Their oath to support and defend the Constitution is really an oath to support and defend themselves, since in the long run their constitution is one of their own making.

So I am hardly surprised that today Democrats and their leftwing allies turn to a fictional constitution when telling the Senate to do its job. That constitution, however, simply does not exist. The real Constitution leaves to the President and to the Senate the decision about how to exercise their respective powers in the appointment process.

What is the Senate's job regarding the Scalia vacancy? The Senate's job is to determine the best way to exercise its advice and consent power under the circumstances we face today. Thankfully, we are not without guidance in deciding the best way to exercise our advice and consent power regarding the Scalia vacancy. We can, for example, look at precedent.

It hardly takes a law degree to know that a precedent is more legitimate if it is more similar to the situation before us. Comparing apples and apples is more helpful than, say, comparing apples and rocks. That is just a matter of common sense.

Candidly, the fictional claims offered in recent days suggest that some of the lawyers among us could benefit from even more common sense. Over the years, the Senate has considered nominations in different ways at different times, depending on the circumstances. Consider these precedents with great bearing on the current circumstances: The Senate has never confirmed a nominee to a Supreme Court vacancy that opened up this late in a term-limited President's time in office. This is only the third vacancy in nearly a century to occur after the American people had already started voting in a Presidential election, and in the previous two instances—in 1956 and 1968—the Senate did not confirm a nominee until the following year. And the only time the Senate has ever confirmed a nominee to fill a Supreme Court vacancy created after voting began in a Presidential election year was in 1916, and that vacancy arose only because Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes resigned his seat on the Court to run against incumbent President Woodrow Wilson.

There is also another precedent that has received little attention but is worth considering. President John Quincy Adams nominated John Crittenden to the Supreme Court in December 1828, after Andrew Jackson won the Presidential election. The Senate, by voice vote, rejected an amendment to a resolution regarding the Crittenden nomination that asserted it is the duty of the Senate to confirm or reject a President's nominees. In one of its reports on the confirmation process, the Congressional Research Service discussed this vote and concluded: ''By this action, the early Senate declined to endorse the principle that proper practice required it to consider and proceed to a final vote on every nomination.''

I believe the precedents, such as they are, support the principle that the Senate must decide for itself how to exercise its power of advice and consent in each situation.

We have another source of guidance for how to exercise the advice and consent power in the particular circumstances of the Scalia vacancy. In 1992—another Presidential election year during divided government—then-Judiciary Committee Chairman JOSEPH BIDEN, now our Vice President, addressed this very issue. Senator BIDEN recommended that if a Supreme Court vacancy occurred that year, the entire appointment process—both nomination and confirmation—should be deferred until the election season was over. Here is what he said in a lengthy interview with the Washington Post:

> If someone steps down, I would highly recommend the president not name someone, not send a name up. If [the president] did send someone up, I would ask the Senate to seriously consider not having a hearing on that nominee.

Chairman BIDEN also explained the reasons for this recommendation. He said, for example, that an election-year nominee would be caught up in a ''power struggle'' over control of the Supreme Court.

He was prescient.

In that interview, Chairman BIDEN also said:

> Can you imagine dropping a nominee, after the . . . decisions that are about to be made by the Supreme Court, into that fight, into that cauldron in the middle of a presidential year? . . . The environment within which such a hearing would be held would be so supercharged and so prone to be able to be distorted.

A week later, Chairman BIDEN addressed the Senate about the confirmation process and further explained his recommendation for deferring the appointment process should a Supreme Court vacancy occur. He repeated his recommendation regarding how to handle a Supreme Court nomination occurring that year. Let me refer to this chart and read it:

> President Bush should consider following the practice of a majority of his predecessors and not—and not—name a nominee until after the November election is completed. . . . [I]f the President . . . presses an election-year nomination, the Senate Judiciary Committee should seriously consider not scheduling confirmation hearings on the nomination until after the political campaign season is over.

Chairman BIDEN again explained the reasons for this recommendation. The confirmation process had degraded in the wake of controversial nominations, and the Presidential campaign that year looked to be particularly bitter. As a result, he said, partisan bickering and political posturing would overwhelm the serious evaluation required. In addition, the Presidential election season was already well underway, and different parties controlled the nomination and confirmation phases of the appointment process.

Chairman BIDEN could have been talking about 2016 instead of 1992. In fact, each of the factors leading to his recommendation for deferring the appointment process in 1992 exists in the same or greater measure today.

Not a single Democrat objected to Chairman BIDEN's recommendation to defer the appointment process. Not one. Not one Democrat. If what Democrats say today is true—that the Constitution requires a prompt hearing and a timely floor vote for every nomination—surely someone, anyone would

have said so in 1992. Not so. My colleagues will search the 1992 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in vain for the slogan ''do your job.'' It appears that a different Constitution was in force in 1992 because no Democratic Senator or leftist organization insisted that the Constitution required a prompt hearing and timely floor vote. No one claimed that the Senate would be shirking its constitutional duty by following Chairman BIDEN's recommendation.

The first step in exercising our power of advice and consent regarding the Scalia vacancy then is to decide how best to do so in the circumstances we face today. Precedent generally, and guidance from past Senate leaders specifically, counsel strongly in favor of deferring the confirmation process until after the Presidential election season is over. That is clearly the best course for the Senate, the judiciary, and, of course, the Nation. That conclusion is reinforced by another important factor: Elections have consequences. Democrats and their left-wing allies also use that axiom but want people to believe that 2012 was the only election relevant to the Scalia vacancy. They want people to believe that because President Obama was re-elected in 2012, he should be able to appoint whomever, whenever, and however he likes. That idea must appear in another provision of the Democrats' fictional constitution because, once again, the real one says no such thing.

The 2012 election did give the President the power to nominate, and he can exercise that power however he chooses until his final minutes in office next January, and I will uphold that right. He has exercised that power by nominating Judge Merrick Garland.

The 2012 election, however, was not the only one with consequences. The 2014 election, for example, had tremendous significance for the Senate's power of advice and consent. The American people gave control of the Senate, and therefore control of the confirmation process, to Republicans. Here, too, we may find some guidance from our friends on the left in addressing this circumstance. President Ronald Reagan nominated Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court in 1987. This was 3 years after his reelection and a year after the Senate majority changed hands.

Here is how the New York Times addressed the argument that elections have consequences:

> The President's supporters insist vehemently that, having won the 1984 election, he has every right to try to change the Court's direction. Yes, but the Democrats won the 1986 election, regaining control of the Senate, and they have every right to resist.

The same circumstances obviously exist today. By the way, no one should waste time wondering if the New York Times has applied the same principle today. It, of course, hasn't.

In addition to 2012 and 2014, the 2016 election will have tremendous consequences for the American people and the courts. It will give the American people a unique opportunity to express their opinion about the direction of the courts by electing the President who nominates and the Senate that gives advice and consent. Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, have very different views about the kind of judge that America needs. Justice Scalia represented a defined, modest approach to judging while, as I mentioned earlier, President Obama has advocated an expansive and activist approach.

I have served on the Judiciary Committee longer than all but one Senator since the committee was created 200 years ago. One thing is clear to me: The conflict over judicial appointments is a conflict over judicial power. The two models of judicial power or judicial job descriptions that I have described have radically different consequences and implications for our Nation and our liberty.

The American people have expressed increasing concern about the Supreme Court's direction since President Obama was elected. Most Americans, for example, believe that Supreme Court Justices decide cases based on their personal views and object to their doing so. With Justice Scalia's untimely passing, the American people now have a unique opportunity to have a voice in charting a path forward.

I cannot conclude today without addressing what is widely understood to be part of the President's strategy in nominating Judge Garland to the Scalia vacancy. The Senate confirmed Judge Garland to the U.S. Court of Appeals by a vote of 76 to 23 in 1997. This, I take it, is supposed to suggest that the Senate should do likewise regarding Judge Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court.

So there is no mistake, I will say this as clearly as I can: The confirmation process regarding the Scalia vacancy will be deferred until after the election season is over for the reasons I have explained. That decision has nothing whatsoever to do with the identity of the nominee, and Republicans made our decision known weeks ago, before the President had chosen anyone.

I think highly of Judge Garland. But his nomination doesn't in any way change current circumstances. I remain convinced that the best way for the Senate to do its job is to conduct the confirmation process after this toxic Presidential election season is over. Doing so is the only way to ensure fairness to the nominee and preserve the integrity of the Supreme Court.

I also want to emphasize that the considerations relevant to an individual's nomination to one position do not necessarily lead to the same conclusion regarding his nomination to another position, especially the Supreme Court. Here, too, I want my colleagues to be aware of guidance we can draw on from the past.

In 1990, then-Chairman JOSEPH BIDEN presided over the hearing on the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. He said: ''[T]here is a fundamental distinction between what is required of and should be sought of a circuit court judge and a district court judge and a Supreme Court Justice.'' He was right then, and he is right today.

Democratic Senators made the same point in 2005 when they sought to distinguish their earlier support for John Roberts' appeals court nomination from their intention to oppose his Supreme Court nomination. Mr. SCHUMER, our distinguished Senator from New York, for example, called it a whole new ball game. He said, ''you've got to start from scratch.'' Senator LEAHY agreed, saying that the Supreme Court is different from the lower courts. I couldn't agree more. Add this to the list of standards that my Democratic colleagues have reversed now that the partisan shoe is on the other foot. Senate Republicans have explained repeatedly and in detail why the best way to exercise our advice-and-consent power in this situation is to defer the confirmation process. That conclusion is completely unrelated to whether the President chooses a nominee, or if he does so, who that nominee is.

President Obama could have followed Vice President BIDEN's 1992 advice and deferred a nomination to fill the Scalia vacancy. He chose not to do so. For the reasons I have discussed—precedent, past guidance, and the consequences of elections—the Senate should follow that advice and defer the confirmation process for the good of the Senate, the Judiciary, and the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court in light of President Obama's announcement that he has nominated Chief Judge Merrick Garland to replace Justice Scalia.

Replacing Justice Antonin Scalia, who was one of our Nation's strongest defenders of our Constitution, will be difficult. For almost 30 years, with his brilliant legal mind and animated character, he fiercely fought against judicial activism from the bench. He will be greatly missed by not only his family and loved ones but by all Americans who shared his core conservative values and beliefs.

Under the Constitution, the President shall nominate a replacement, as he did today, and the Senate has a constitutional role of advice and consent.

This is a constitutional responsibility that I take very seriously.

The decisions the Supreme Court makes often have long-lasting ramifications that—with one-vote margins—can dramatically alter the course of our country. At a time when the current administration has stretched the limits of the law and attempted to circumvent Congress and the Federal court system, choosing the right candidate with the aptitude for this lifetime appointment is as important as ever.

I have determined that my benchmark for the next Supreme Court Justice will be Justice Scalia himself. Scalia's strict interpretation of the Constitution and deference to States' rights set a gold standard by which his replacement should be measured.

As we all know, every Republican member of the Senate Judiciary Committee sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL expressing their firm belief that the people of the United States deserve to have a voice in determining the next Supreme Court Justice. In their letter, they wrote:

Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution is clear. The President may nominate judges of the Supreme Court. But the power to grant—or withhold—consent to such nominees rests exclusively with the United States Senate.

As a result, the committee does not plan on holding any hearings related to this issue until after a new President has taken office. This decision will allow the American people to have a voice in the next Supreme Court Justice based upon who they elect as the President this November.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have argued that the American people did have a voice when they elected President Obama in 2012, but that election was nearly 3½ years ago. Since that time, a lot has changed in our country, signaling a shift in America's views of our President and his philosophy of government. We don't need to look any further than the 2014 elections for proof. In the 2014 elections, the Senate switched from Democratic-controlled to Republican-controlled. In fact, I am one of those Republican Senators who replaced a Democrat in the last election. Many of us who ran were not supporting the President's policies. In fact, we ran because we wanted to change the direction the President was moving our country.

At the State level, in 2012, the last time President Obama was elected, there were 29 Republican Governors and 20 Democratic Governors. In 2014, the number of Republican Governors rose from 29 to 31, while the number of Democratic Governors decreased from 20 to 18. We saw similar results in State legislative races across the country.

In 2012, Republicans held a majority in both chambers of 26 State legislatures. In 2014, that number rose to 30. And if we take into account the conservative-leaning but officially nonpartisan legislature of Nebraska, that number jumps even higher—to 31.

In 2012, Democrats held the majority of both chambers in 15 States. In 2014, that number was reduced to 11.

So in the years since the President's last election, Republicans not only held a strong majority in the House of Representatives, but they took back control of the Senate and increased their numbers at the State level as well.

There is no doubt that there has been a clear shift in the minds of the American people since President Obama's last election.

I believe, just as many of my colleagues do, that the Republican victories of 2014 should be taken into consideration and, therefore, we should wait to confirm the next Supreme Court Justice until after a new President takes office. Overwhelmingly, South Dakotans who have contacted my office agree with this decision.

One gentleman from Lemmon, SD, wrote to me saying: ''Our country hangs in the balance as to what the future of this great country will look like. . . . This decision is too crucial and the next Supreme Court nominee should be nominated by the next President of the United States.''

Another South Dakotan from Brandon noted: ''This is a rare opportunity for the American voter to actually have a voice in how the Court will be structured for many years to come. Please help preserve that opportunity for us all.''

In another example, a woman from Estelline wrote saying: ''Hearing of the passing of Justice Scalia was heartbreaking news. I ask that you do your part to allow the people to have a say in who the next Justice of the Supreme Court will be.''

These are just a few examples of the numerous South Dakotans who have contacted my office who agree that the American people have a voice in the direction our country will take in the decades to come. As much as my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would like to see the Senate confirm a nominee from our current President, the reality is that when the tables are turned, they agree with our position. In fact, it was Vice President JOE BIDEN who, when he served as the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said on this very floor in 1992: ''It is my view that if a President goes the way of Presidents Fillmore and Johnson and presses for an election-year nomination, the Senate Judiciary Committee should seriously consider not scheduling confirmation hearings on the nomination until after the political campaign season is over.''

It was minority leader HARRY REID who said in 2005: ''The duties of the United States Senate are set forth in the Constitution of the United States. Nowhere in that document does it say the Senate has a duty to give presidential nominees a vote.''

And the Senate Democrats' next leader, Senator SCHUMER, said in 2007, close to 2 years before President Bush's term ended: ''We should not confirm any Bush nominee to the Supreme Court except in extraordinary circumstances.''

Whoever is confirmed to fill the open seat on the Supreme Court will be serving a lifetime appointment. Keeping in mind the current political makeup of the Court, the man or woman who will replace Justice Scalia has the potential to hold incredible influence over the ideological direction of the Court for a generation to come.

It is critically important that the next Justice be committed to upholding the principles of the Constitution. We owe it to Justice Scalia, our judicial system, and the Constitution to uphold the highest standards when determining our next Supreme Court Justice. We also owe it to the American people to make certain that their voice is heard in this election.

For these reasons, I agree with my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee and in the Senate leadership that we should not hold hearings on a Supreme Court nominee until after our new President takes office.

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

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

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I am once again on the floor for my 37th edition of ''Waste of the Week'' speech, where I disclose wasteful spending, fraud, and abuse of taxpayers' dollars. It seems it is never ending because after 37 weeks I feel as if I am just scratching the surface.

Last week, as some will remember, I talked about how the National Science Foundation spent $331,000 of hard-earned tax dollars by giving a grant to researchers to study whether or not being ''hangry'' is a real thing. Most people have not heard about the word ''hangry.'' Last week I suppose people ran to the dictionary to see what the description was. ''Hangry''—I think among the younger people—means that you are both hungry and angry, and you are angrier than you normally would be in a situation because you are hungry.

I wasn't hungry last week when I was talking about ''hangry,'' but I was angry. I was angry over the fact that $331,000 of taxpayers' money was being used to offer a grant from the National Science Foundation to study whether this exists. They came up with this crazy situation of giving voodoo dolls to husbands and wives. Every time a husband was angry with his wife, he would take a pin and stick it into the voodoo doll or if she was angry with him, she would take a pin and stick it

into the voodoo doll. I don't know who ended up with the most pins. Probably the wife had more pins in the voodoo doll than the husband did. Nonetheless, then a glucose test was taken to see if they were actually a little short on glucose in the bloodstream, meaning they were hungry. Well, the conclusion was that, yes, if you were hungry, you tended to be a little more on edge, a little more testy.

That might have been a fun study to be engaged in just for laughs, but this was paid for with taxpayer dollars. This was a grant issued by the National Science Foundation. We tell people about the National Science Foundation, and they must think, oh, that is probably one of the better government agencies.

So that was last week, and I wasn't sure that anything could top last week. Because I was quoted as saying—who could make up stuff like this? Do people sit around and say: Let's see if we can get a grant to do some kind of research project that is nothing but crazy? The amazing thing is someone over at the National Science Foundation looked at this study and thought: Hey, this is a good idea. Let's give them a $331,000 grant. And so we added it to the chart.

Now we are here this week, and I want to talk about something that is maybe even scarier than sticking pins in voodoo dolls, and it is called the Master Death File. This is not the name of a new novel on the New York Time's best seller list. This is not the name of a new movie coming out. The Master Death File is something, folks, you don't want to be on.

The Federal Government, by law—the Social Security Administration—has to maintain the Master Death File. Obviously, those of us on Social Security or who are of Social Security age don't want to see our name on that list. If your name is on that list, you are no longer eligible for Social Security payments because it is a death list; you have died.

So as sinister as it sounds, it is probably necessary that we do this—that we have at least some list that lets the Social Security Administration know that it is time to stop sending Social Security checks to dead people. The beneficiary or the recipient has died, and, therefore, procedures are made so that the next check doesn't keep rolling out and rolling out and rolling out.

A lot of us here in the Senate get on different kinds of lists—voter records, awards for standing up for certain issues and policies that people respect—and I have found myself on a number of those. One list I don't want to be on, but know that as a human being I am sort of careening toward, is the Master Death File. So we thought, well, let's dig into this and see how it works. So we went to the Government Accountability Office and said: What about this Master Death File?

So we did some investigation on that. Out of that investigation came an example of one agency the General Accountability Office had examined, and it is the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture sends out checks—payments for conservation, disaster relief and crop subsidies. Well, we found that between 2008 and 2012, $27.6 million in payments for conservation, disaster relief, and crop subsidies were made to people who had died. What is more disturbing is that many of those recipients had been dead for more than 2 years.

This is just one department out of all the hundreds of Federal agencies that issue checks for all kinds of different purposes. So it is important to have a Master Death File because what we want these agencies to do—in fact, they are obligated to do under the law—is to check the master death list to make sure the checks aren't going to people who are on that list.

Obviously, with this one agency—the Department of Agriculture—one of two things happened: Either names did not get on that list, or names were on the list, but they didn't check it. Either way, there is a responsibility here for the Federal Government in handling taxpayer dollars to make sure that for those who are deceased, their names get on the Master Death File—as scary as that is—and/or, if they are on the list, they do not receive the payments.

In this digital age, it shouldn't be too hard to keep that Master Death File updated. Every State has records that have to be kept—sent by the coroner or authorized by the hospital or whatever. There are a number of sources of finding out. Particularly in the digital age, it is pretty easy to enter a name when you get the certificate of death. You enter the name, it goes onto the master death list, and it ought to be relatively easy for agencies sending out checks to coordinate with that by either pushing a button or going into an app or whatever and finding out that John Jones or Bill Smith still qualifies for his Social Security payments. That check ought to be pretty automatic.

Unfortunately, it isn't, particularly when you find people have been receiving these checks even 2 years after they have died. So something is amiss here. It is not like in the old days, where you probably had to call Farmer Bob out in rural America and say: Do you know if Farmer Joe down the road is still living? Have you seen him in town lately? What is happening? Did you go to the funeral? We don't have to do all that anymore. This stuff is all digitized and all very accessible.

So here we are with the Social Security Administration needing to do what it needs to do to make sure that list is kept up-to-date. And, as I say, none of us are anxious to get on that list. I see all the young pages down here thinking: I have a long time to go. They are looking at this aging Senator thinking: You are a lot closer to that list than we are. I hope they are not thinking that. Some of them are smiling. Nonetheless, the agencies that are issuing the checks also have to do their job because, in a serious way, this is taking money from hard-working taxpayers. It is hard-earned money taken from those who have to pay the bills at the end of the week, who have to cover their mortgage and provide for the education of their children and who have to buy food at the grocery store and gas at the gas pump. People are scraping by, and when they see this kind of thing or hear about this kind of thing, they are outraged.

We are seeing this being played out in the nomination process on both sides—the Republicans and the Democrats. People are frustrated with the inefficiency and the ineffectiveness of the Federal Government in the use of their tax dollars. So I am here to illustrate that—not to spur continued anger and outrage but to get people seriously focused on the fact their dollars are not being wisely spent. They need to call their Congressmen and Senators, and they need to say: You need to do a better job of managing our money we are sending you to protect this Nation, to provide for roads, bridges, health care, and so forth.

There are some essential things government needs to do, but surely it doesn't need to put out $331,000 for a ''hanger'' study with voodoo dolls, and it doesn't need to waste $27.6 million of checks going to people who are deceased and who are no longer eligible for receiving that.

So we continue to add money to our total—another $27.6 million to our $157,619,142,953. These numbers get up there. So we are at $157,619,142,953, and we will be back next week with the next edition of ''Waste of the Week.''

I thank the Chair.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

METHANE EMISSIONS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, last week the Prime Minister of Canada came for a visit. President Obama used that opportunity to take yet another cheap shot at American energy producers. The administration has made a deal with Canada to cut methane emissions from oil and gas production facilities.

They want tough new restrictions to cut emissions almost in half over the next decade. The very same day, the Environmental Protection Agency said that it plans to come up with more regulations for methane.

The Obama administration is already trying to limit the methane that gets released from new oil and gas wells as they get put into production. Now the administration wants to go back and impose those limits on existing wells—ones that were built to actually comply with the current rules on the books.

Here is what I find most interesting about this. This was an official state visit by a foreign leader to the United States. It was the first trip for the new Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau. So President Obama decided that the most important thing the two countries could talk about was methane—not Syria, not trying to stop radical Islamist terrorists, not dealing with ISIS, not the hostile regimes of North Korea, Iran, or Russia, not what we could do to actually help our economies grow—no. Instead, President Obama chose to focus on methane.

Why is President Obama so fixated on this? Let me tell you. The President is bitter—bitter that the Supreme Court is blocking his Clean Power Plan. He is pouting and he is pandering. He has gone after coal, he has gone after oil, and now he is going after natural gas. It is a vendetta against American energy producers.

The President and other Democrats are pandering to radical environmental extremists and to their billionaire donors.

We all want to make sure that we have a clean environment. My goal is to make American energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, and to do it in ways that don't raise costs for American families. That is why the people I talk with in Wyoming believe that this new regulation is the wrong approach.

My local newspaper, the Casper Star Tribune, had a front-page article about it on Friday. The headline was this: ''Cuts to methane emissions proposed.'' The article quotes John Robitaille. He is from the Petroleum Association of Wyoming. He says the Environmental Protection Agency ''has failed to recognize the economic burden placed on replacing equipment on existing wells as opposed to new wells''—ones that are still to be built.

John Robitaille may say ''failed to recognize.'' I say the administration deliberately refuses to recognize—refuses. For Washington to come in and demand expensive new equipment for all of these oil and gas wells would be a huge cost. It would drive up prices for consumers, and it would mean that some of these wells wouldn't be economically worthwhile anymore. The oil and gas would stay in the ground where it does nothing to help power our economy or power our country.

States are already doing their part. States are trying to limit methane leaks where they find a problem. Colorado has a leak detection and repair program that will help keep ozone and methane from escaping. Wyoming, my home State, is looking for ways to get more up-to-date equipment on new wells as they get going.

So the States are already taking the lead, and they are already coming up with solutions where they are needed. This is not a one-size-fits-all regulation coming from unelected, unaccountable Washington bureaucrats. But that is what we are having to deal with now in this administration.

What we prefer are State solutions. What I just described are State solutions that strike a commonsense balance between a strong economy and a very healthy environment. It is not just the States that are taking action. Oil and gas producers also want to reduce how much methane escapes from these wells.

When you think about it, producers would prefer to capture that gas and then to sell it so it can be used. That is why the industry reduced methane emissions by 13 percent between 2008 and 2013. Over the same years, U.S. shale gas production grew by 400 percent. So the industry actually cut emissions even while gas production went way up. This happened because of the action that the producers in the States have already been taking, not because of more regulations coming out of Washington, DC. Energy producers need the flexibility to tackle these emissions when and how it makes sense.

There are already too many rules on the books. The Bureau of Land Management has another methane rule in the works. More duplicative regulations will just raise costs for Americans at a time when our economy is weak and emissions actually are already dropping.

This new redtape could add hundreds of millions of dollars every year onto the cost of producing American red, white, and blue energy. If the Obama administration really wants to reduce emissions from oil and gas wells, it should help the industry to capture this gas and to use it.

This was the subject of bipartisan legislation that Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP of North Dakota and I offered last month. It was an amendment to the energy legislation. Our bipartisan amendment would have expedited the permit process for natural gas gathering lines—the lines that gather this gas on the Federal land, on Indian land and then help take it to market.

Gas gathering lines are essentially pipelines that collect unprocessed gas from oil and gas wells and then ship it to a processing plant. At the plant, different kinds of gases—methane, propane—are separated from one another. They are then shipped out again to locations where they can be sold and used by people.

That is what the producers want to do. The problem is that we don't have enough of these pipelines now to gather up the gas and to send it to the processing plants. A lot of times there is only one option if you don't have the gathering lines, and that is to flare or vent the excess natural gas at the well. If there were more gathering lines, we would have a lot less waste of energy. We would have a lot less of these methane emissions that President Obama claims to be so worried about. So Senator HEITKAMP and I offered a better way to deal with the problem, and 43 Democrats here in the Senate blocked our amendment.

At a hearing of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee last month, I actually asked Interior Secretary Jewell about the idea. Even she had to concede that speeding up the permits was something that they should be looking into.

This doesn't have to be a fight. We all agree there is too much of this gas that has been vented or burned off at the oil and gas wells. Republicans know it. Democrats know it. Energy producers know it. So why can't we agree to let the industry build the gathering lines to help them capture the gas where it makes sense and how it makes sense? Why do we need more Washington regulations that impose higher costs?

America's energy producers have increased production while reducing emissions. They have provided what may be the only bright spot in our economy over the past 7 years. We should be doing all that we can to help and to encourage them. We should be looking for voluntary, cost-effective ways to make sure that we can make American energy as clean as we can and as fast as we can without raising costs on American families. The Obama administration is going in the wrong direction.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO KYLE RUCKERT

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my longest serving staff member, my chief of staff, campaign manager, and close friend Kyle Ruckert, who is departing the Senate at the end of this week to start an exciting new career. Kyle was one of my very first hires when I was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1999. He started as my legislative director in the House under the wonderful tutelage of my first chief of staff, Marty Driesler. And I know Kyle and I are both indebted to Marty, who is now unfortunately deceased, for getting us started on a wonderful footing in Congress. Then Kyle became my chief of staff upon Marty's retirement in 2002.

I guess I would sum up the bottom line in a very simple but important way: There has not been one moment during these 17 years when I have regretted placing my complete trust in

Kyle to lead our office and serve the people of Louisiana—not one. From day one, Kyle set the office standard of service to constituents and set it as a top priority. He established offices throughout the State. One of his most memorable decisions instituted a mobile office on wheels so that we could reach out to those hit hard by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008—folks who could not otherwise reach our permanent offices. I say ''memorable'' because for the staffers who actually had to man and woman that vehicle, it was an adventurous ride.

Of course, Kyle's leadership style and commitment to service comes from his wonderful parents, and I take a moment to thank his parents, John and Ellen Ruckert, who are with us in the Gallery and whom I have also come to know and respect.

I also think a big part of Kyle's commitment to serve others comes from his time at Jesuit High School in New Orleans, where the motto is ''Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam''—''For the Greater Glory of God''—and where all students are expected to accept the challenge of becoming a ''man for others'' as part of the Ignatius tradition. Kyle is probably one of the best ambassadors for Jesuits, and he even played a role in my son Jack going there. Go, Blue Jays.

In 2004, Kyle moved down to Louisiana to manage my first Senate campaign. He quickly earned the respect of national political prognosticators on the campaign side who quite frankly belittled our chances from the beginning. Kyle reacted to the conventional wisdom that we couldn't win a runoff against our so-called moderate Democratic opponent in a pretty straightforward way: He simply made sure we got more than 50 percent of the vote in the open primary, so we never went to a runoff. Problem solved. Kyle's discipline and strategic thinking are largely to thank for that win, and after that he immediately returned to manage our Senate office as chief of staff. Unfortunately, our first major test in the Senate was a tragic one. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated Louisiana and was followed very shortly by Hurricane Rita. Constituent service, always a top priority, took on an even greater urgency and seriousness, and Kyle led our team to help, console, and serve all ''For the Greater Glory of God,'' acting as a ''man for others.''

Kyle led our staff managing an effective operation, first and foremost, assisting constituents on the ground, and in Congress, helping to put together emergency assistance legislation, making sure people in real need received what they absolutely needed. This was one of the most chaotic times for all of us from Louisiana, but Kyle was always calm and methodical, always steering the ship with a steady hand.

Kyle's leadership is contagious. His expectations are very high—be at work, get it over 100 percent, and get the job done. If that means working at night and on weekends, he would expect that out of everyone on the team and, unlike some other so-called leaders, he would be right there leading the way in that regard. Our staff has become stronger because of that leadership by example and that contagious work ethic.

Besides his calm, disciplined, methodical leadership style, Kyle's strongest attribute is his loyalty and trust he places in those he works with. He always encourages staff to take chances, to be bold in pushing new reforms, in negotiating amendment votes, in pushing important stories with the press. When staff would run ideas by him and ask him what he thought, he would say: If you think it is the right thing to do, go for it. Just don't—bleep—it up.

His leadership was tested again on the campaign side in our 2010 reelection race, where again the political commentators largely bet against us, and again Kyle made sure they were wrong in a big way. We won that race by 19 points. Since then I have had the real fortune of serving in leadership positions in the Senate, as the ranking Republican in the EPW Committee in 2013 and 2014 and currently as chair of the Small Business Committee.

Aside from our many legislative accomplishments under Kyle's leadership, what I am perhaps most proud of is the close-knit team we built together. We call it Team Vitter, and those are more than just words in our office. We both look at our staff as an extension of our immediate families. Certainly my wife Wendy and our kids and I definitely think of Kyle and his family as part of ours.

Kyle sets a gold standard for thinking of staff as family—for treating them that way. Perhaps, in part, because he married another one of my former staffers, Lynnel. Lynnel started working in my office on the House side early on in 2002. She worked there until 2004 and also joined that first winning Senate campaign. It is interesting, Kyle and Lynnel started dating secretly, not telling anyone in the office—certainly not me. I think they were first discovered when my first chief of staff, Marty Driesler, got a call from her daughter who had witnessed them being weekend tourists in Philadelphia together. Of course, I was still kept in the dark for months after that, even though Marty discovered their courtship.

Lynnel, too, always stressed constituent service and is a brilliant political strategist. They truly were meant for each other in all sorts of ways. Lynnel has continued her extremely successful career, most recently serving as chief of staff to House majority whip STEVE SCALISE.

In 2005, Kyle and Lynnel got married, and since then our office has had three other couples from Team Vitter get married. Perhaps there is more to those late work nights than I had imagined originally.

Kyle and Lynnel and their two kids, Jack, who is now 9, and Mary Kyle, who is now 6, are getting settled in Baton Rouge as part of a new, exciting chapter of their lives. It is going to be fun. We are going to miss them, but it is going to be fun to see this new chapter for Kyle and Lynnel and their family develop, especially when we get to see Kyle, as a New Orleans native and an avid Tulane Green Wave alumn, having to start wearing purple and gold around Baton Rouge at the urging of their son Jack.

Who knows, maybe he will even develop a superstition before LSU games. Something a lot of folks don't know about Kyle is he is incredibly superstitious—knock on wood. He will detour his Monday morning drive in New Orleans to pass by the Superdome if the Saints won on Sunday. He will sip the same type of bourbon for good luck or wear his lucky green polo if we need a win in sports, politically, or anything in between.

I will tell a quick story related to that about his green polo. On election day in 2004, Kyle was wearing a campaign T-shirt, but he wasn't going to be able to go to the polls that way to vote and do some poll watching, so he asked around the office if he could borrow a different shirt. Mac Abrams, who is now DEAN HELLER's chief of staff—and who was a key staff member in my office in my campaign at the time—loaned him his green polo. Well, we won that race big, and Kyle hasn't returned the green polo yet. He wears it every election day, although we are not sure if it is superstition or also because he is so darn cheap.

While Kyle will now be living in Louisiana, his impact will remain strong in our work and our office and our culture. He will be able to see it in legislation which helps Louisiana and the country, in thousands and thousands of constituents whom he and our team effectively reached out to, and in the great example he set for so many staffers and interns and others on our team.

So let me end really where I began, by paying him the highest compliment possible, repeating that there hasn't been one moment in these great 17 years where I regretted placing my complete trust in Kyle Ruckert to lead our team, to lead our office, to help lead us in serving the people of Louisiana—not one.

Kyle, thank you for your service to Louisiana, for the countless hours you have spent helping me, for the fun memories and laughs we have shared, and most importantly for your friendship. You truly are part of my family. I have the greatest confidence that you will continue on ''Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam''—''For the Greater Glory of God''—truly a ''man for others.''

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may address the Senate as in morning business.

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

The Senator from Arizona

IMPRISONMENT OF NADIYA SAVCHENKO

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, it has been 2 years since Nadiya Savchenko, the first female military pilot in post-Soviet Ukraine and an Iraq war veteran, was abducted from Ukrainian territory by pro-Russian separatists and smuggled across the border to Russia where she faces false charges and illegal imprisonment.

She is accused by Russia of having directed artillery fire that killed two Russian state television journalists in Eastern Ukraine in June of 2014 and then illegally crossing into Russian territory without proper paperwork. This is despite clear evidence provided by her lawyers that she was captured by separatists before this incident occurred and then hauled across the border in handcuffs with a sack over her head.

Following her capture, Nadiya has reportedly endured interrogations, solitary confinement, and was subjected to a psychiatric evaluation at the infamous Russian Serbsky Institute, where Soviet authorities were once known to torture political dissidents. Further media reports suggest that she is gravely ill and near death.

There are international laws that govern treatment of prisoners of war, but Russia continues to deny it is fighting a war in Ukraine and is therefore treating Nadiya as a common criminal. While there are also international laws that govern the treatment of common criminals, Russia has shown as much regard for those laws as for Ukraine's sovereignty or the rights of Russians such as Boris Nemtsov.

This is a picture of Nadiya standing trial in a cage. From her prison cell in Russia, Nadiya said:

> If I am found guilty, I will not appeal. I want the entire democratic world to understand that Russia is a Third World country with a totalitarian regime and a petty tyrant for a dictator and it spits on international law and human rights.

In her last appearance in court, Ms. Savchenko said:

> The trial proves the guilt of Russian authorities; they are to blame for seizing Ukrainian lands, capturing Crimea and starting a war in the Donbass region. They are to blame for trying to establish—through their foul undeclared wars all over the world—a totalitarian regime dominated by Russia.

She ended her court appearance by saying:

> Russia will return me to Ukraine yet. Whether I am dead or alive, it will return me.

Nadiya's captivity represents just the latest example of Russia's brazen aggression and disregard for the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Last summer another brave Ukrainian and film director from Crimea, Oleg Sentsov, faced a similar fate. A Russian court sentenced Mr. Sentsov to 20 years in prison based on charges that he was planning a terrorist attack against Russian forces after the peninsula was annexed by Russia. Despite strong evidence that Mr. Sentsov was innocent and despite international condemnation of his case, he remains in a Russian prison serving out his 20-year sentence. As Mr. Sentsov said in remarks following his sentence: ''A court of occupiers can never be just.''

Nadiya is just one of President Putin's countless victims. Her show trial—a throwback to the Stalinist Soviet era—is intended not to establish innocence or guilt, but to punish dissent, evoke fear, and remind citizens of what happens to people who dare defy the former KGB officer, Vladimir Putin.

Her trial illustrates just how far President Putin is willing to go to humiliate Ukraine for its pursuit of freedom and punish Ukrainians for refusing to accept its illegal occupation. It is just one more way that Putin is trying to bully free peoples and free nations into submission. He is sending the message that anyone who dares to challenge him will end up in a cage just like her—or worse.

Putin's efforts are failing. The Ukrainian people have shown that they will not be intimidated, they will not be silenced, and they will not give into fear. They have shown that they will continue to fight for a free and democratic future for Ukraine with or without the international support they need and deserve.

One of the more shameful chapters in American history will be the fact that we still refuse to give Ukrainians defensive weapons with which to defend themselves. This President has made a lot of grievous errors, but it is outrageous, as we watch Ukrainians slaughtered by Russian tanks, that we will not even give them the weapons to defend themselves.

The Ukrainian Government has urged Moscow to release Nadiya in accordance with the Minsk II agreement that provides for the release of all illegally held persons. International leaders have echoed this call, but her illegal imprisonment continues. It is time to move past meaningless condemnations and expressions of concern and respond to Putin's shameful and blatant breach of international law by sanctioning—I emphasize sanctioning—those responsible for the kidnapping and illegal, unjust imprisonment of Ms. Savchenko, as well as the officials involved in the fabrication of false charges against her.

A clear message must be sent to Moscow: Release Nadiya or face sanctions. Release her or face sanctions.

The United States has a critical role to play in the preservation of freedom and democracy throughout the world, and it is a role that we suppress at our own peril. I know this is not a popular cause in the United States right now, but nothing will relieve us of the responsibility to stand up for those whose fundamental human rights are being violated and to defend the values that America and our allies have sacrificed so much to preserve.

How we respond to each and every attempt by Putin to suppress democracy and freedom will have far-reaching repercussions. The United States and the entire international community must respond to this latest outrage in a way that demonstrates the inevitability of the values which Nadiya so clearly represents. Nadiya's fight—and that of all Ukrainians who rose up peacefully against tyranny in their quest for freedom—must also be the world's fight. We must continue to show Putin that he cannot halt the march to freedom and democracy. The Ukrainian people—and the Russian people, too—deserve no less.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CUBA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, as the President prepares to go to Cuba, I rise in memory of all of those Cuban dissidents who have given their lives in the hope that Cuba one day would be free from the yoke of the Castro regime. It is that freedom I had hoped President Obama was referencing when he said:

> What I've said to the Cuban government is—if we're seeing more progress in the liberty and freedom and possibilities of ordinary Cubans, I'd love to use a visit as a way of highlighting that progress. . . . If we're going backwards, then there's not much reason for me to be there.

But that is obviously not the case, which is why the Boston Globe's headline on February 25 says it all: ''Obama Breaks Pledge, Will Visit Cuba Despite Worsening Human Rights.'' Instead of having the free world's leader honor Latin America's only dictatorship with a visit, he could have visited one of 150 countries that he has not visited, including several in Latin America that are democracies.

The President has negotiated a deal with the Castros—and I understand his desire to make this his legacy issue—but there is still a fundamental issue of freedom and democracy at stake that goes to the underlying atmosphere in Cuba and whether or not the Cuban people will still be repressed and still be imprisoned or will they benefit from the President's legacy or will it be the Castro regime that reaps those benefits?

Unless the Castros are compelled to change their dictatorship—the way they govern the island and the way they exploit its people—the answer to this won't be much different than the last 50-some-odd years. The Castro regime will be the beneficiary.

At the very least, the President's first stops should be meetings with internationally recognized dissidents: U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom winner Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet and the European Union's Sakharov prize recipients Guillermo Farinas and Rosa Maria Paya, in respect for her murdered father, Oswaldo Paya, who was leading the Varela Project, advocating for civil liberties, and collecting thousands of signatures petitioning the Castro regime for democratic change—as permitted, by the way, under the Cuban Constitution. So threatening was his peaceful petition drive that he was assassinated by Castro security agents.

The President should meet with Berta Soler at her home, in her neighborhood, with the Ladies in White, and with dissidents and democracy advocates in Havana. That should be the front-page photograph we see next week. Only then will the message that the United States will not give in or give up on our commitment to a free and democratic Cuba be clear to the world and to the Cuban people.

To leave a truly honorable mark in history would mean the President leaving Castro's cordoned-off tourist zone and seeking Berta Soler and her Ladies in White at their headquarters in the Lawton neighborhood of Havana, where poverty, Castro-style—not opportunity, not freedom, not democracy but poverty created by a Stalinist state—is the umbrella under which they live.

The President should witness their bravery, listen to their stories, feel their despair, see the fear under which they live, and stand up with them and for them. If he did, he could learn of the story of Aliuska Gomez, one of the Ladies in White, who was arrested this past Sunday for marching peacefully.

Basically, the Ladies in White dress in white as a form of a symbol. They march with a gladiolus to church every Sunday in protest for their sons and husbands who are arrested simply for their political dissent, and they are beaten savagely—savagely.

The President could learn of the story of Aliuska Gomez, one of the Ladies in White, who was arrested this past Sunday for marching peacefully. I am reading from an article in Diario de Cuba where she told her story:

''We were subjected to a lot of violence today,'' said Aliuska Gomez. ''Many of us were dragged and beaten,'' she added, pointing out that this has taken place only one week before President Obama's visit. Aliuska related how she was taken to a police station in Marianao where she was forcibly undressed by several uniformed officers in plain view of some males. . . . ''After they had taken away all of my belongings,'' she said, ''they told me to strip naked, and I refused, so they threw me down on the floor and took off all of my clothing, right in front of two men, and they dragged me completely naked into a jail cell.'' Aliuska was then handcuffed and thrown on the cell's floor naked and left alone.

Or how about the young Cuban dissident who met with Ben Rhodes and was arrested in Havana. This is from a report dated March 14:

Yesterday the Castro regime arrested Carlos Amel Oliva, head of the youth wing of the Cuban Patriotic Union, a major dissident organization. He is being accused of antisocial behavior. On Friday, Amel Oliva had participated in a meeting in Miami with Ben Rhodes, President Obama's Deputy National Security Advisor. He returned to Havana on Sunday.

I guess that is what Raul Castro thinks and does to those who meet with the President's Deputy National Security Advisor.

Notwithstanding their true stories and the stories of thousands like them, the President first announced sweeping changes to America's strategic approach to the Castro regime in December 2014. In broad strokes, we learned of the forthcoming reestablishment of diplomatic relations—an exchange of symbols, with the American flag flying over a U.S. Embassy in Havana and the Cuban flag flying over a Cuban Embassy in Washington. We learned about the process by which Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism would be lifted. We learned about the forthcoming transformative effects of a unilateral easing of sanctions to increase travel, commerce, and currency.

But for those of us who understand this regime, we cautioned for nuance and urged against those broad strokes. We asked that the administration at least require the Castros to reciprocate with certain concessions of their own, which would be as good for U.S. national interests as for the Cuban people and for U.S.-Cuba relations.

For example, before the President ever traveled to Burma—a country with notorious human rights abuses and with which this administration began to engage—the United States first demanded and received action by the Burmese to address their human rights record. To be sure, the Burmese Government agreed to meet nearly a dozen benchmarks—a dozen benchmarks—as a part of this action-for-action engagement, including granting the Red Cross access to prisons, establishing a U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights office, release of political prisoners, conclusion of a cease-fire in Kachin State, and ensuring international access to conflict areas.

We asked, as the President's Cuban policy unfolded, that they push for changes that put Cubans in control of their own future, their political process, economic opportunities, civil society, and governance. We didn't get a single one.

We asked for changes that would honor America's legacy as a champion for human rights. We didn't get those either.

We suggested changes that would ultimately bring Cuba into the community of nations, contributing to, rather than detracting from, the overall prosperity of the hemisphere. And there were none.

Most importantly, we asked that they remember that it is a lack of resources, not a change of heart, that slowed the Castros' adventurism and instability-inducing support for those who would pose threats to our national interests within the Western Hemisphere.

In essence, we were thinking strategically. Instead, we traded strategy for tactics. Leading Cuban human rights and democracy activists have criticized U.S. policies—those languishing inside of Cuba who risk their lives and their liberty every day.

The simple truth is that deals with the Devil require the Devil to deal. Opening channels of communications controlled by the regime means nothing unless we are going to communicate our values. It means nothing if we do not champion the material changes the Cuban people seek. It means nothing if we do not speak the language the Castros understand—that the Communist revolution has failed miserably and it is time to let the Cuban people decide their future.

The Castros know it, but it is the antiquated hallmark of the revolution and the iron-fisted rule that came from it that keeps them in power. We talk about being in the past. Well, that is in the past, but no one challenges that past. Until that power is truly challenged, we can expect to witness the further weakening of our leverage on behalf of democracy and human rights.

In the meantime, the regime is already moving forward, already breathing new life into its existing repressive state systems. Cubans are being beaten, arrested, and otherwise muzzled at higher rates—higher rates—than ever before. The Cuban Commission for Human Rights, which is within Cuba, has documented 1,141 political arrests by the Castro regime in Cuba during the short month of February 2016. In January 2016 the commission documented 1,447 political arrests. As such, these 2,588 political arrests in the first 2½ months of this year represent the highest tally to begin a year in decades. This is what happens when President Obama first announces he will not visit Cuba until there are tangible improvements in the respect for human rights, and then he crosses his own red lines—nearly 2,600 arrests in 2½ months, and these are only political arrests that have been thoroughly documented. Many more are suspected.

U.S. fugitives and members of foreign terrorist organizations, such as Joanne Chesimard, the convicted killer of New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster, or Charlie Hill, who killed New Mexico State Trooper Robert Rosenbloom, still enjoy safe harbor on the island. Not a penny of the $6 billion in outstanding

claims by American citizens and businesses for properties confiscated by the Castros has been repaid.

Unrelenting censorship and oppression of Cuban journalists continues unscathed, and the Cuban path to liberty doesn't even include the U.S. Embassy.

So what do we learn? We learn that, despite the Obama administration's engagement with the Castro dictatorship and increased travel to the island, repression on the island is rising exponentially. Why? Because the Castro regime, one of the most astute observers of the American political system, is rushing to take advantage of the permissive environment created by the President's hunger for legacy and the relaxation of restrictions. But legacy is not more important than lives.

For years we have heard how an improvement in U.S.-Cuba relations, an easing of sanctions, and an increase in travel to the island would benefit the Cuban people—a benefit not realized despite the visits and investments of millions of Europeans, Canadians, Mexicans, and South Americans. There is not one iota of better life or greater democracy for the Cuban people. These assumptions are wrong. And since December 17, 2014, the President has engaged the regime, offering unilateral concessions that the Castros are more than happy to accept. If that is not enough for us to at least question our Cuba policy, we are now facing an unfolding Cuban migration crisis.

The United States is faced with the largest migration of Cuban immigrants since the rafters of 1994. The number of Cubans entering the United States in 2015 was nearly twice that of 2014—some 51,000—and tens of thousands more are desperately trying to make the journey via South and Central America. I ask: Why would Cubans flee if the promise of a better life in Cuba is just on the horizon? When President Obama took office, those numbers were less than 7,000 annually—51,000.

We hear that ''self-employment,'' such as it is in Cuba, is growing. But the number of ''self-employed'' workers in Cuba has actually decreased. The Cuban government today is licensing 10,000 fewer ''self-employed'' workers than it did in 2014. In contrast, Castro's military monopolies are expanding at record pace. Even the limited spaces in which ''self-employed'' workers previously operated are being squeezed as the Cuban military expands its control of the island's travel, retail, and financial sectors of the economy.

While speaking recently to a business gathering in Washington, here in the Nation's Capital, President Obama argued how he believes this new policy is ''creating the environment in which a generational change and transition will take place in [Cuba].'' But the key question is, A ''generational change and transition'' toward what and by whom?

Cuban democracy leader, Antonio Rodiles, has concisely expressed this concern. He said ''legitimizing the [Castro] regime is the path contrary to a transition.''

CNN has revealed that the Cuban delegation in the secret talks that began in mid-2013 with U.S. officials in Ottawa, Toronto, and Rome, and which led to the December 17 policy announcement, were headed by Colonel Alejandro Castro Espin. Colonel Castro Espin is the 49-year-old son of Cuban dictator Raul Castro.

In both face-to-face meetings between President Obama and Raul Castro this year—first at April's Summit of the Americas in Panama City and just recently at the United Nation's General Assembly in New York—Alejandro was seated, with a wide grin, next to his father. Alejandro holds the rank of colonel in Cuba's Ministry of the Interior, with his hand on the pulse and trigger of the island's intelligence services and repressive ordinances. It is no secret that Raul Castro is grooming Alejandro for a position of power.

Sadly, his role as interlocutor with the Obama administration seeks to further their goal of an intrafamily generational transition within the Castro clan, similar to the Assads in Syria and the Kims in North Korea. And we know how well those have worked out.

To give an idea of how Colonel Alejandro Castro views the United States, he has described its leaders as ''those who seek to subjugate humanity to satisfy their interests and hegemonic goals.'' This is who is being readied to be the next leader of Cuba, with whom we have been negotiating.

Of course, it also takes money to run a totalitarian dictatorship, which is why Raul Castro named his son-in-law, General Luis Alberto Rodriguez Lopez Callejas, as head of GAESA, which stands for Grupo de Administracion Empresarial S.A., or translated, Business Administrative Group.

GAESA is the holding company of Cuba's Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Cuba's military. It is the dominant driving force of the island's economy. Established in the 1990s by Raul Castro, it controls tourism companies, ranging from the very profitable Gaviota S.A., which runs Cuba's hotels, restaurants, car rentals, and nightclubs, to TRD Caribe S.A., which runs the island's retail stores. GAESA controls virtually all economic transactions in Cuba.

According to Hotels Magazine, a leading industry publication, GAESA—through its subsidiaries—is by far the largest regional hotel conglomerate in Latin America. It controls more hotel rooms than the Walt Disney Company.

As McClatchy News explained a few years back:

> Tourists who sleep in some of Cuba's hotels, drive rental cars, fill up their gas tanks, and even those riding in taxis have something in common: They are contributing to the [Cuban] Revolutionary Armed Forces' bottom line.

In essence, Cuba's military and its repressive system.

GAESA became this business powerhouse, thanks to the millions of Canadians and European tourists that have and continue to visit Cuba each year. The Cuban military-owned tourism company, Gaviota Tourism Group S.A., averaged 12 percent growth in 2015 and expects to double its hotel business this year.

These tourists have done absolutely nothing to promote freedom and democracy in Cuba. To the contrary, they have directly financed a system of control and repression over the Cuban people, all while enjoying cigars by Cuban workers paid in worthless pesos and having a Cuba Libre, which is an oxymoron, on the beaches Varadero. Yet, despite the clear evidence, President Obama wants American tourists to now double GAESA's bonanza and, through GAESA, strengthen the regime.

An insightful report by Bloomberg Business also explained:

> [Raul's son-in-law, General Rodriguez] is the gatekeeper for most foreign investors, requiring them to do business with his organization if they wish to set up shop on the island. If and when the U.S. finally removes its half-century embargo on Cuba, it will be this man who decides which investors get the best deals.

Again, he is part of the Cuban military. So this is not about people to people. This is about us helping the very entities that help fund the Cuban military and security agencies. In other words, all of the talking points about how lifting the embargo and tourism restrictions would somehow benefit the Cuban people are empty and misleading rhetoric.

In addition, Internet ''connectivity ranking'' has dropped in Cuba. The International Telecommunication Union's ''Measuring the Information Society Report'' for 2015, the most reliable source of data and analysis on global access to information and communication, dropped Cuba's ranking to 129, down from 119. Cuba fares much worse than some of the world's most infamous suppressors, including Syria, Iran, China, and Venezuela—worse.

In Cuba, religious freedom violations have also increased. According to the London-based NGO, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, last year, 2,000 churches in Cuba were declared illegal and 100 were designated for demolition by the Castro regime. Altogether, they documented 2,300 separate violations of religious freedom in 2015, compared to 220 in 2014—2,300 versus 220. So religious oppression is on the rise. And if that is not enough, Castro reneged on the release of political prisoners and visits by international monitors. Most of the 53 political prisoners released in the months prior and after the President's December 2014 announcement have since been rearrested on multiple occasions. Five have been handed new long-term prison sentences. Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch noted in its new 2016 report that ''Cuba has yet to allow visits to the island by the International Committee of the Red Cross or by the United Nations human

rights monitors, as stipulated in the December 2014 agreement with the United States.''

These were the conditions that prompted Congress, over the course of our long history with Cuba, to pass successive laws to build on—not detract from—Executive orders that created the embargo. So I stand with thousands of Cuba's civil society leaders, dissidents, journalists and everyday men and women who long for the day when the freedom we enjoy in our great country extends to theirs. As long as I have a voice, they will have an ally to speak truth to power against this dictatorship and against any effort to legitimize it or reward it.

We must realize the nature of the Castro regime will not be altered by capitulating on our demands for basic human and civil rights. If the United States is to give away its leverage, it should be in exchange for one thing, and one thing only: a true transition in Cuba.

Finally, as for the latest announcements from the administration, I stand against any rollback of the statutory provisions that codify Cuba sanctions. We learned this week that the administration has cleared the way for individual travel to Cuba outside the auspices of a group or organization, and that is tourism, plain and simple.

We learned this week that the administration has cleared the way for Cubans—athletes, artists, performers, and others—to earn salaries in the United States, which, in and of itself would be a good thing, except that, unfortunately, much if not all of those salaries will go back to the regime, as they must pay the regime most of what they make abroad.

We learned that Americans may purchase Cuban-origin products and services in third countries—cigars, alcohol, and basic products produced by a system of slave labor that funnels proceeds to one place: the regime's pockets.

When it comes to banking and financial services, we will now permit the U.S. financial system to facilitate the flow of these and other proceeds directly to the regime. The administration will allow the Cuban Government, which profits from the sale of intelligence—as when they had our Hellfire missile—to export Cuban-origin software to the United States. Never mind that the Cuban Government aggressively monitors the Internet activity of Cuban dissidents and sensors users on the island. And then we are going to permit direct shipping by Cuban vessels. These ''significant amendments'' to the Cuban Assets Control Regulations and the Export Administration Regulations, cornerstones of implementation of United States sanctions against the Castro regime announced on Tuesday, create new opportunities for abuse of permitted travel. They authorize trade and commerce with Castro monopolies and permit the regime to use U.S. dollars to conduct its business. They are unilateral concessions, requiring no changes from the Castro regime to the political and economic system under which the Castros exploit lives and labor of Cuban nationals.

In a meeting late last week, I warned officials at the Department of Treasury that these changes ''come up to the line and in some cases cross it,'' with respect to statutory authority. Their actions are inconsistent with existing statutes and incompatible with the intent of Congress as expressed through those statutes. I should know, as I was one of the authors of the Libertad Act when I served in the House of Representatives.

In my view, at the end of the day, this is a unilateral transfer of the little remaining leverage that the administration hadn't given away prior to this week's announcement. With these steps, I believe Commerce and Treasury have set the stage for legal action against the administration. Congress has authorized categories of travel to Cuba, but none of these categories were tourism or commerce for commerce's sake with the regime. The President has said his Cuba policy ''helps promote the people's independence from Cuban authorities,'' but it is clear that it does not. Yet, this week, in what would seem to contravene not only the letter but the spirit of the law, the administration will reportedly allow the regime to use U.S. dollars in international financial transactions and a U.S. hotel company to partner with a Cuban military conglomerate run by the Castro family.

Let's be clear. It is not the Cuban people who are eager and willing to shuffle dollars through BNP Paribas, INB Group, or HSBC Bank; only the regime is willing and eager to do so.

As for the reports that Starwood-Marriott is looking for an arrangement with the regime, with the blessing of the administration, it would be an agreement with a subsidiary of GAESA, the Cuban military conglomerate run by Raul Castro's son-in-law, General Luis Alberto Rodriguez Lopez-Callejas. So how does that help the Cuban people when you are working and helping the regime? It would be an agreement to manage a hotel for the Cuban military. Among those considered is Havana's swanky hotel Saratoga, which has been confiscated twice by the Castro regime—an agreement by which employees are also hired by the regime's state employment agency instead of directly by a company, in violation of international labor laws.

So I ask, how does allowing U.S. companies to do business with the regime, let alone the Castro family itself, ''promote the Cuban people's independence from the authorities,'' as the President has said?

This breathes new life into the Castro's repressive state systems, and that new life means one thing: The repressive system will continue without changes.

Next week, when we anticipate we will see a photograph of the President of the United States laughing and shaking hands with the only dictator in the Western Hemisphere, I will be thinking of Berta Soler of the Ladies in White and her fellow human rights and democracy advocates. She testified before Congress last year and said: ''Our demands are quite concrete; freedom for political prisoners, recognition of civil society, the elimination of criminal dispositions that penalize freedom of expression and association and the right of the Cuban people to choose their future through free, multiparty elections.'' It is not an overwhelming ask. What American would be willing to not have those basic fundamental freedoms?

What are we willing to do to impose on another country—to say: We will deal with you even though you repress your people and deny them those freedoms.

Those are the words of freedom Berta Soler spoke on her behalf and all of those who risk their lives and liberty every day inside of Cuba to create that possibility. That is the legacy we should work toward until the Cuban people are finally freed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK GARLAND

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, early this morning I got a telephone call from a White House staffer who told me that the President was going to announce his choice to fill the vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court occasioned by the passing of Antonin Scalia. This morning I was invited to the Rose Garden to witness that ceremony, and I thought it was one of the President's best deliveries of a message to the American people about a critically important issue.

I applaud President Obama for his nomination of Chief Judge Merrick Garland to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. No one questions that Judge Garland is an outstanding attorney and has been an exceptional judge during his 19 years on the DC Circuit Court. No one questions his qualifications and experience to serve with distinction on the Supreme Court. I congratulate him, his wife Lynn, whom I just met, and his daughters, Becky and Jessie, on this nomination.

Judge Garland is a proud son of Illinois. He is the grandson of immigrants who fled anti-Semitic persecution. He was born in Chicago to parents who ran a small business and volunteered in their community. He graduated at the top of his class from Niles West High School, received his undergraduate law degree from Harvard, and clerked for the legendary Judge Henry Friendly of the Second Circuit and Justice William Brennan of the U.S. Supreme Court. He has an incredible legal resume. He served in the Justice Department and worked in private practice before he was nominated to the DC Circuit Court.

Today President Obama told the story of how Merrick Garland in the

U.S. Department of Justice was sent down after the Oklahoma City bombing to handle the prosecution and how he carefully, deftly, and professionally handled that prosecution in a way that it would stick and it wouldn't be overturned because of legal mistakes. He personally felt an attachment and obligation to the victims and their families, and he carried with him the memorial service bulletin that was given out with the names of each one of the victims. He brought it with him to the courtroom each day. He is that kind of person—a prosecutor but with empathy to the victims and a determination to make sure he followed the law. He did.

President Obama has fulfilled his constitutional responsibility, and now the Senate must do the same. Article II, section 2, of the Constitution provides the requirement that the President shall appoint a nominee to fill a vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court, and the President did that today.

That same section of the Constitution goes on to say that it is the responsibility of the Senate—this Senate—to advise and consent to that nominee. There is no requirement that we approve the President's nominee. He wants us to. I hope we do. But what it says is we have a responsibility under the Constitution—the same Constitution we swore to uphold and defend.

So the President is using his authority and constitutional responsibility by naming Merrick Garland. Now what will happen? The Republican leadership in the Senate has said: End of story; we are not going to do anything. Some Senators have gone so far as to say they will not even meet with this man, will not even meet with the President's nominee for the Supreme Court. In the history of the United States of America, there has never—underline ''never''—been a situation where the President sent a nominee to the Supreme Court to the Senate and there was not a hearing. Never. And now the Republican majority here has said: Ignore history. Ignore the Constitution. We are not going to let this President fill this vacancy.

Their argument is this: Let the American people decide. There is an election coming. It will be in November. Let them pick a President, who will then choose that Supreme Court nominee.

Well, that is an interesting approach. It might make some sense had President Barack Obama been reelected in 2012 to a term of 3 years and 2 months. He was reelected to a 4-year term by a 5 million-vote plurality. He is the President. And to argue that in his last year in office, he should have no authority or power in the Constitution to exercise what is required of him is to ignore the obvious.

By what right do we, in the closing year of a Senator's term, vote on the floor of the Senate if we are disqualified from making important decisions in our last year in office in each term? It is a ludicrous position, a ridiculous position. It is a position which I find offensive.

This system of government gives to the American people the last word about who the President will be. There have been times when I have applauded that decision and times when I didn't. But if you are respectful of this Constitution and this government, then you follow the will of the people of this great Nation, and they made a decision by a plurality of 5 million votes that Barack Obama would have this power for 4 years, until January of 2017. So the President has sent this name, and now it is up to the Senate.

The Judiciary Committee plays an important role in this decision, and I am honored to serve on it. In 2001, then-chairman of the committee PATRICK LEAHY, Democrat of Vermont, joined with Ranking Republican Member ORRIN HATCH of Utah and they sent a letter to the Senate about this issue of filling Supreme Court vacancies—a bipartisan letter, LEAHY and HATCH. Here is what it said: We both recognize and have every intention of following the practices and precedents of the committee and the Senate when considering Supreme Court nominees.

We should hold a hearing without delay. If this letter was the case 15 years ago and Senator HATCH, who was then the ranking Republican, joined with Senator LEAHY, the Democratic chairman, what has changed? The only thing that has changed is we have a President named Barack Obama.

You see, in 1987 there was a vacancy on the Supreme Court. Ronald Reagan was President. In 1988 he sent the name Anthony Kennedy to this Chamber to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court. The Senate at that time was under the control of the Democrats. Ronald Reagan, a Republican President, sent his nominee to the Democratic Senate, and what happened? Did they announce: We are not going to fill this; we will wait until after the election. No, no. The Democratic-controlled Senate held a hearing for Anthony Kennedy, brought him up for a vote, and passed him unanimously to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. Now look at what we are facing—Republican colleagues who refuse to do their job under the Constitution. For what reason? Obviously for political reasons.

My Republican colleagues say they are standing behind a principle that the President should not get to name the Supreme Court Justice in his final year. That principle has no history, no precedent, and is virtually impossible to defend.

I would suggest a different principle to my Republican colleagues. Since Judge Merrick Garland is unquestionably qualified and you clearly would vote to confirm him under the next President, why wait? Why not vote to confirm him under this President? Failing to fill this vacancy on the Supreme Court means there will be over 1 year from the death of Justice Antonin Scalia until a successor is chosen. The only time in history when the Senate left a vacancy on the Supreme Court for that period of time—1 year or more—was during the Civil War when we were literally at war with one another in the United States. If that is the only time that ever happened, there is no excuse for us to let it happen again at this moment in our history.

To my friends on the Republican side of the aisle, do your job. Fill this vacancy. Meet your constitutional responsibility.

FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. President, on Friday the Department of Education released its latest proposals for new regulations on borrower relief when a school engages in unfair, deceptive, or abusive conduct. The proposals will be debated this week at the third negotiated rulemaking session as part of the formal rulemaking process.

I want to speak about one of the issues addressed in the latest proposal from the Department of Education—the use of mandatory arbitration in enrollment contracts by institutions of higher education. These clauses, which for-profit colleges and universities often bury in fine print, prevent students from bringing suit against a school in court as an individual and often as part of a class action. It means, for example, that if a student applying to a school is deceived and misled by that school as to the degree they will receive or the job they will qualify for, they can't bring a legal action in court against the school. Instead, the student is forced into a secret proceeding where the deck is stacked against him. It allows schools to avoid accountability for their misconduct and prevents misconduct from coming to the attention of Federal regulators.

While nearly unheard of in not-for-profit institutions—think about public universities and private, not-for-profit colleges—mandatory arbitration has now become virtually standard in for-profit colleges and is used by all of the majors, such as the University of Phoenix, ITT Tech, and DeVry University, just to name a few. It was also used by Corinthian. Corinthian, another for-profit college, made sure that if their students signed up for a contract with the school, they signed this arbitration clause which eliminated the student's day in court.

I was pleased when the Department, in its latest proposal for current rulemaking, included an option for banning the use of mandatory arbitration by all institutions receiving Federal title IV dollars. I thank the Department for including it in its proposal.

I also want to take a moment to discuss ITT Tech. ITT Tech is another for-profit college that is under scrutiny by Federal and State regulators. Last year the Department of Education found that the company, ITT, failed to meet its fiduciary duty to the Department and failed to meet the standards

of administrative capability required of institutions under title IV, and they placed restrictions on ITT. The Department then required ITT Tech to pay nearly $80 million to be kept in escrow to guard against the potential collapse of this for-profit school. The company is under investigation by 18 State attorneys general related to deceptive marketing. This is deceptive marketing of college students who are being misled into signing expensive tuition contracts with this school.

The New Mexico attorney general found that ITT Tech placed students into loans without the knowledge of the students, falsely stated the number of credits a student had to take in order to push them into more debt, failed to issue refunds of tuition and fees in compliance with Federal law, and a variety of other deceptive practices. If that wasn't enough, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is also suing the company for predatory lending.

This is the exploitation of college students. This is piling up debt.

We have to frequently remind ourselves of the basics. Ten percent of the students in college are in for-profit colleges and universities. Among those are the University of Phoenix, DeVry, Kaplan, and ITT Tech. Out of that 10 percent, 40 percent of all student loan defaults are from students in the for-profit colleges and universities.

How is it that 10 percent of the students in for-profit schools account for 40 percent of all student loan defaults?

First, the students go too deep in debt. These for-profit schools are way too expensive. Second, when the students can't keep up with the debt they are accumulating, they drop out, and when they drop out, it is the worst of both worlds. They don't even have a diploma from the for-profit school, and they still have a debt. Third, if they hang around long enough and finish and get a diploma from these for-profit schools, they find out many times they are worthless. Forty percent of the loan defaults are from students who attended for-profit colleges and universities. These schools are coercing students into high-cost loans with interest rates as high as 16 percent and more, and they misrepresent future job prospects to them.

Finally, the Securities and Exchange Commission is suing the company, ITT, and two of its executives, Kevin Modany, its CEO, and Daniel Fitzpatrick, its CFO, personally for concealing the poor performance of private institutional student loans from investors.

Behind all of this scrutiny by Federal and State regulators are students who have been harmed irreparably. According to a recent Brookings study, ITT Tech students cumulatively owe more than $4.6 billion in Federal student loans.

How much is being paid back on this cumulative debt? According to the study, negative 1 percent of the balance has been repaid in 2014. What does it mean? How can it be a negative number? Simple—the interest on this accumulative debt is occurring faster than it can be paid off by the students. Individual students often have no chance of paying back this personal debt when they have taken out a loan and end up with a worthless degree from ITT Tech.

What responsibility do we have as a government when it comes to these schools that are deceiving students, dragging them into debt, and then watching as they default? We have a major responsibility. For-profit colleges and universities are the most heavily subsidized private businesses in America today. We have all heard the term ''crony capitalism.'' It couldn't apply more aptly to for-profit colleges and universities. Most of their revenues don't come from students and families—only indirectly. Most of their revenue comes through the Federal Treasury in the form of government loans that end up in the pockets of the owners of these for-profit colleges and universities.

More than half the students who left ITT in 2009 are in default on their student loans 5 years later—half.

One former student of ITT Tech is Marcus Willis from Illinois. He was aggressively recruited by ITT Tech with multiple phone calls each day. He finally signed up for classes. He graduated in 2003 from ITT Tech and spent months unable to find a job. When talking about his debt, Marcus said:

> It's too much to even keep track of. I will never, ever be able to pay it back.

He said that he ''wouldn't wish ITT Tech on his worst enemy.''

Despite all the lawsuits, the scandal, and students like Marcus, January was a big month for ITT Tech executives Kevin Modany and Daniel Fitzpatrick. They both got big bonus checks. Modany received $515,000 and Fitzpatrick received $112,000. They can expect more. In 2014, Mr. Modany was paid more than $3 million. These are the same two who the SEC says violated numerous Federal securities laws in a fraudulent scheme to hide information from investors. But ITT Tech's board looks the other way. Instead of penalizing or dismissing them, they give them a bonus. ITT Tech investors have a right to be outraged.

Current and former ITT Tech students are also outraged. The Federal taxpayers should be outraged too. You see, ITT Tech receives 80 percent of its revenue from Federal student aid funds. Nearly $1 billion a year comes from the Federal Treasury, and even more than that when you count the money they take in from VA, GI bills, and the Department of Defense tuition assistance funding.

Recently, I sent a letter to ITT Tech's accreditor, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools, asking them what steps they were going to take to respond to this company's misconduct and shaky financial situation. They responded last week that they have required ITT Tech to submit teach-out plans to ensure that students can continue their education at other institutions should the company fail. Incidentally, the other institutions are probably going to be more for-profit schools. So they transfer the kids from one failing for-profit to another questionable for-profit college.

They also told me that they will assess ITT Tech's financial stability, education quality, and program integrity when they get together in April.

I encourage the council which accredited Corinthian, which is now out of business, to make sure they take a hard look at ITT Tech. The writing is on the wall. There are reports that the University of Akron may be interested in buying this questionable college. I will be watching this development carefully to ensure that any potential transaction is in the best interest of students, their families, and taxpayers.

MENTAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. President, mental health conditions affect one out of five American adults. Yet this disease continues to be stigmatized, undertreated, and reduced to second-class status when it comes to certain health care benefits. Just like any other physical health disease, mental health conditions require a dedicated treatment plan and support for full recovery.

I still remember years ago, when Paul Wellstone, who used to sit right back there, and Pete Domenici, who sat over there, were in the Senate. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, was a Democrat, and Pete Domenici of New Mexico was a Republican—what an unlikely pair. They came together because each of them had family experiences with mental health. What they tried to do—and successfully did—was to include in all of our health insurance plans coverage for mental health counseling as well as substance abuse treatment. It became standard. When we passed ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act, it was built into health insurance policies. I have heard Members stand here and say: I am getting rid of ObamaCare. We are going to vote against it and make that go away. When they say that, we need to ask them: Will the coverage for mental health conditions go away too? How about the coverage for substance abuse treatment, will that coverage go away too?

This change made a big difference. It was a huge step in the right direction to expand access to mental counseling. We have to further eliminate barriers to treatment.

Last week, the Senate passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, authorizing several important programs to help people deal with mental health and substance abuse issues. I supported it because it was a step in the right direction. We know that approximately 44 million Americans experience some sort of brain health or mental illness issue during the year,

and millions don't receive treatment or support. This need for mental health services is especially dire with one group of Americans.

How often in your life experience have you noticed a young man or woman go off to college and for the first time ever manifest some serious mental health issues? I have seen it with frequency, and I know that many schools struggle with it.

Studies have shown that one-half of all chronic mental illness begins by age 14 and three-fourths by age 24. College students can face stress in new academic surroundings and new social environments. Many of them are away from home for the first time, and mental health concerns start to manifest. Despite this, colleges and universities have limited resources to deal with it. The ratio of counselors to students far exceeds recommended levels, preventing colleges and universities from identifying the most at-risk students.

Right now, we are seeing a huge disparity between reported mental health needs and services being provided. In one nationwide study, 57 percent of students reported having felt overwhelming anxiety, 35 percent felt so depressed it was difficult to function, and 48 percent felt hopeless. Now, I remember some bad nights and bad mornings when facing a tough test, but we are talking about young people who have gone beyond that. They are facing some serious personal challenges.

Only 10 percent of enrolled students seek any kind of counseling. This means that too many are slipping through the cracks and too many are not receiving treatment for mental illness. This can have tragic results.

While millions of Americans suffer from serious mental illness, a very small statistical group engages in violence against themselves or others. We have examples of what happens when someone dealing with mental illness becomes violent. There was a horrific tragedy in 2008 on the campus of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. Six people died in a school shooting as a result of someone suffering from mental illness. Their families were changed forever, and so was the campus.

Not all mental health emergencies grab national headlines. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Americans aged 15 to 34. We can't ignore the silent suffering of millions of Americans, including many young people. That is why I have joined with Senator SUSAN COLLINS, a Republican of Maine, and Senator MICHAEL BENNET, a Democrat of Colorado, to introduce bipartisan legislation to improve mental health services on college campuses, expanding outreach and counseling and tackling the mental health illness stigma. I am happy to partner with Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY of Illinois in introducing this legislation.

Our bill, the Mental Health on Campus Improvement Act, will support colleges and universities by giving them resources to better support the mental health needs of their students. It establishes a grant program to provide direct mental health services and outreach. Our bill will also increase awareness and treatment by promoting peer support training and engagement with campus groups. It launches a national education campaign to reduce the stigma, encourage identification of risk, and enhance the conversation about mental health and seeking help.

This bill is sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the American Psychology Association, the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Chicago, and the American College Health Association, among others.

This morning this legislation was adopted by a voice vote as an amendment to the Cassidy-Murphy Mental Health Reform Act in the HELP Committee.

I thank Senators COLLINS and BENNET for their efforts to advance the bill. I also thank Senators CASSIDY, MURPHY, MURRAY, and ALEXANDER for working with us to ensure this important provision was included in the larger bill.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this bipartisan measure. I also know there is a lot of interest in addressing barriers to treatment in Medicaid, known as the IMD exclusion, which is under the Finance Committee's jurisdiction. I will continue to push a bill that I cosponsored with Senator KING of Maine, the Medicaid Care Act, which expands access to treatment and coverage.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE NIGERIAN MILITARY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, nearly a year ago when Muhammadu Buhari became the first Nigerian to defeat a sitting President through the ballot box, I greeted the news with cautious optimism. For the most part, his message was and remains one that encourages greater cooperation between the United States and Nigeria to defeat Boko Haram and chart a brighter course for Africa's most populous nation.

Recent attacks by Boko Haram have served as a sobering reminder of the challenges Nigeria continues to face, and I have supported every initiative by the Obama administration to counter this scourge. Through my role as ranking member on the Department of State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, I have also supported hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid for Nigeria annually, particularly for public health activities.

But words and money only go so far. While President Buhari has taken positive steps to combat corruption and his government has shown more interest than his predecessor in addressing the development challenges in the north, reports of human rights abuses by the Nigerian military continue to undermine the government's reputation and effectiveness. Unfortunately, this is nothing new. And although President Buhari has taken some initial steps to reform the military, far more needs to be done when it comes to accountability for such crimes.

I want to highlight an incident which, although tragic, provides an important opportunity for President Buhari to begin to reverse the long history of impunity within Nigeria's security forces. According to credible reports, on December 12, 2015, a convoy that was transporting Nigeria's chief of army staff was unable to bypass a gathering orchestrated by the Islamic Movement of Nigeria in Zaria, and the ensuing clashes resulted in as many as 300 civilians killed and many others detained. According to information I have received, many of the bodies were quickly buried by soldiers without the permission of family members, making it difficult to determine the death toll, but also making it hard for victims' families to know who had been killed and who had been taken into custody. The Kaduna State government subsequently established a judicial commission of inquiry to investigate the incident, a positive first step, and it is expected to complete its work sometime this month.

Serious questions, however, have been raised about the impartiality of the commission. While I understand that the inquiry is being conducted at the state level, it has national implications. The fact that President Buhari has said little about this situation—noting only that it is ''a military affair''—is worrisome given the potential for wide-ranging implications and the commitments he made during his inaugural speech to ensure discipline for ''human rights violators in the armed forces.''

I hope the Buhari administration fully supports the Kaduna State government judicial commission of inquiry and takes whatever steps are necessary to ensure it fulfills its responsibilities. The risks are great if the commission is deemed not to have been impartial and thorough in its review and if the findings are not publicly released and acted on, as appropriate. At

the very least, a significant opportunity will have been missed to demonstrate that the Government of Nigeria values and defends the rule of law, is committed to transparency, and seeks to make real progress on issues of justice and accountability.

While this is an issue that Nigeria must tackle, I stand ready to support any assistance the United States can provide to help President Buhari strengthen Nigerian institutions of justice and combat impunity.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the board of trustees, president and CEO William Bell, and the team at Casey Family Programs as this organization celebrates its 50th anniversary this month. Casey Family Programs is the Nation's largest operating foundation focused on safely reducing the need for foster care and building Communities of Hope for children and families across America. Its goal is to influence long-lasting improvements in the safety and success of children, families, and the communities where they live. I am also proud to say that Casey Family Programs is based in Seattle, WA.

March 15 is Casey's founders day. It is a time for the leaders to reflect on the foundation's creator, history, and its mission.

Jim Casey, the founder of United Parcel Service, saw a critical need 50 years ago to ensure that our Nation's most vulnerable children had safe and stable families who would provide the opportunities and support needed to succeed in life. As the eldest child when his father passed away, Jim felt responsible for taking care of his mother and three siblings at the young age of 14. From a fledgling bicycle messenger service that he started in 1907, he steadily grew his company into the world's largest delivery and logistics company United Parcel Services, UPS, in 1919.

Jim Casey said in 1947, ''. . . all of us, if we are to accomplish anything worthwhile, will do it largely through the help and cooperation of the people work with.'' This sentiment led Jim Casey to make a generous donation to create several foundations, including creation of Casey Family Programs in 1966 to provide direct services to children and families.

Over the next 50 years, Casey Family Programs has grown to work with all 50 States and with Native American tribes. Although the foundation started with a specific focus on providing quality foster care, after considerable experience in direct services, Casey Family Programs recognized that it could have greater impact on families and children by working to support long-lasting improvements across entire child welfare systems and jurisdictions. Today the foundation provides strategic consultation, technical assistance, data analysis, and independent research and evaluation at no cost to all 50 States, as well as county and tribal child welfare jurisdictions across the Nation.

From 2009 to 2015, Casey Family Programs will have invested $45 million in Washington. It has supported the work of the child welfare system, courts, tribes, policymakers, and other organizations to build communities of hope that safely reduce the need for foster care and support strong, lifelong families for all children. Washington State has two Casey field offices serving children and families in Seattle and Yakima.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Finance, which has oversight over the Federal foster care funding programs, I value the education and research provided by Casey Family Programs. I was proud to support the Child and Family Services and Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011, which renewed the ability of up to 30 States to seek Federal waivers to explore better ways to service children and families in the child welfare system. Since passage of the law, Casey Family Programs has partnered with interested States to provide information, support, and research on ways to support States that sought waivers.

Washington State is one of the waiver States, and the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe in Washington is the only tribe in our country with a Federal waiver. Casey Family Programs is offering support, data, and regular meetings to help the waiver States implement their waivers and to provide information on the progress of the waivers. This information will be valuable in my oversight work on Federal child welfare policy.

Jim Casey had a vision to help children and families, and the leadership of Casey Family Programs today is following his mission with a nationwide strategy to safely reduce the number of youth in foster care and to invest to build communities of hope. I want to congratulate the foundation for 50 years of service, and I look forward to learning from Casey's reports and leaders to promote further progress in Washington State and across the country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROTARY CLUB OF FRESNO

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the 100th Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Fresno, an organization dedicated to public service in Central California.

On March 1, 1916, Fresno Rotary became the ninth chartered Rotary in the State of California. The Rotary's first philanthropic project—planting 1,000 olive trees along the Golden State Highway—marked the start of a century of public engagement and community service. Since then, the spirit of Fresno Rotary has left an unforgettable mark on some of the community's most iconic local landmarks and organizations, including the Old Fresno Water Tower, Storyland and Playland at Roeding Park, the Boys & Girls Club, the Salvation Army, and numerous schools and hospitals.

The mission of Fresno Rotary goes far beyond the San Joaquin Valley. Over the years, the club has delivered thousands of wheelchairs and water treatment devices to those in need in developing countries and helped provide medical service to more than 100,000 residents living in a rural Mexican village.

A hundred years after its founding, the Rotary Club of Fresno remains a testament to the vision, commitment, and contributions of generations of service-minded Fresno citizens who want to make a positive difference in the world. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the members and friends of Fresno Rotary for their dedicated service, and I am pleased to join in honoring this special anniversary.●

REMEMBERING JERRY ENOMOTO

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Jerry Enomoto, a devoted husband and beloved friend who passed away on January 17, 2016, at the age of 89.

Jerry Enomoto was born and raised in San Francisco. In 1942, Jerry and his family were forcibly relocated to the Tule Lake Incarceration Camp as part of Executive Order 9066, one of the darkest chapters in our Nation's history. Despite being uprooted from Lowell College Preparatory High School, Jerry continued his studies and graduated as the valedictorian of his class while still held at Tule Lake. Upon release, he proudly served in the U.S. Army and subsequently earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of California, Berkeley.

Jerry dedicated his career to public service, serving as the first Asian Pacific American prison warden and the first Asian Pacific American to lead the California Department of Corrections. In 1994, Jerry broke racial barriers yet again by becoming the first Asian Pacific American appointed as a United States marshal.

Outside of work, Jerry was active in several civil rights organizations, twice serving as the national president of the Japanese American Citizens League, JACL. In 1992, JACL presented Jerry with their highest award, Japanese American of the Biennium, recognizing his years of advocacy and leadership. Jerry and his wife, Dorothy, always spoke out against injustice, and in 1999, they co-founded an annual dinner to promote civil rights and diversity in response to a series of hate crimes in their Sacramento community. Now in its 17th year, their annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration Dinner has become a highlight on the calendar for those who are committed to making Sacramento a more equal, inclusive, and diverse community.

Jerry was a true civic leader who lived a life of service and patriotism despite the prejudice he experienced in his own childhood. His immense contributions to the State of California will never be forgotten, and I send my deepest condolences to his wife, Dorothy, and their loved ones.●

REMEMBERING SYLVIA McLAUGHLIN

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Sylvia McLaughlin, an ardent environmental activist; a caring and involved community member; a loving wife; and a proud mother and grandmother who passed away on January 19, 2016.

Sylvia McLaughlin was born in Denver, CO, on December 24, 1916. Inspired by the surrounding Rocky Mountains, Sylvia was drawn to nature from an early age and participated in many outdoor sports, including skiing and mountain climbing. After receiving a bachelor's degree in French from Vassar College in 1939, she married Donald McLaughlin, and the couple settled in Berkeley, CA, where she became engaged in the growing environmental movement.

In response to the city of Berkeley's plan to build on 2,000 acres of the Bay's shoreline, Sylvia co-founded the Save San Francisco Bay Association in 1961, mobilizing thousands of residents in opposition to the Berkeley proposal. Their efforts succeeded, and Save the Bay subsequently championed a 1965 State law designating the San Francisco Bay as a State-protected resource and establishing the Nation's first coastal-zone management agency, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, BCDC. These efforts prevented further unregulated shoreline development, helped preserve the health of the remarkable bay estuary as vital habitat for local wildlife, increased public access along the shoreline, and helped set the stage for later bay and wetland restoration projects that protect this precious ecosystem.

In addition to her pioneering work with Save the Bay, Sylvia remained an environmental activist throughout her life. She served as a board member for organizations, including the National Audubon Society, Citizens for East Shore Parks, Save the Redwoods League, the Trust for Public Lands, Greenbelt Alliance, and East Bay Conservation Corps.

For more than half a century, Sylvia worked tirelessly to preserve the natural resources of the Bay Area and all those who enjoy the beautiful shoreline of San Francisco Bay owe her an enormous debt of gratitude. I send my deepest condolences to her children Jeanie Shaterian and George McLaughlin; her stepson, Donald McLaughlin, Jr.; and her many grandchildren.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER TO TAKE ADDITIONAL STEPS WITH RESPECT TO THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13466 OF JUNE 26, 2008 WITH RESPECT TO NORTH KOREA—PM 45

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the ''order'') with respect to North Korea. The order takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008, expanded in scope in Executive Order 13551 of August 30, 2010, relied upon for additional steps in Executive Order 13570 of April 18, 2011, and further expanded in scope in Executive Order 13687 of January 2, 2015. The order also facilitates implementation of certain provisions of the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016 (Public Law 114–122), which I signed on February 18, 2016, and ensures the implementation of certain provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2270 of March 2, 2016.

In 2008, upon terminating the exercise of certain authorities under the Trading With the Enemy Act (TWEA) with respect to North Korea, the President issued Executive Order 13466 and declared a national emergency pursuant to IEEPA to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the existence and risk of the proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material on the Korean Peninsula. Executive Order 13466 continued certain restrictions on North Korea and North Korean nationals that had been in place under TWEA.

In 2010, I issued Executive Order 13551. In that order, I determined that the Government of North Korea's continued provocative actions destabilized the Korean peninsula and imperiled U.S. Armed Forces, allies, and trading partners in the region and warranted the imposition of additional sanctions, and I expanded the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466. In Executive Order 13551, I ordered blocked the property and interests in property of three North Korean entities and one individual listed in the Annex to that order and provided criteria under which the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may designate additional persons whose property and interests in property shall be blocked.

In 2011, I issued Executive Order 13570 to further address the national emergency with respect to North Korea and to strengthen the implementation of UNSCRs 1718 and 1874. That Executive Order prohibited the direct or indirect importation of goods, services, and technology from North Korea.

In 2015, I issued Executive Order 13687, in which I determined that the provocative, destabilizing, and repressive actions and policies of the Government of North Korea constitute a continuing threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, and further expanded the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466. In Executive Order 13687 I provided additional criteria under which the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may designate additional persons whose property and interests in property shall be blocked.

I have now determined that the Government of North Korea's continuing pursuit of its nuclear and missile programs, as evidenced most recently by its February 7, 2016, launch using ballistic missile technology and its January 6, 2016, nuclear test in violation of its obligations pursuant to numerous UNSCRs and in contravention of its commitments under the September 19, 2005, Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, increasingly imperils the United States and its allies. The order addresses those actions and takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008. The order also facilitates implementation of certain provisions of the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016 (Public Law 114–122), which I signed on February 18, 2016, and ensures the implementation of certain provisions of UNSCR 2270 of March 2, 2016.

The order is not targeted at the people of North Korea, but rather is aimed at the Government of North Korea and its activities that threaten the United States and others. It blocks the property and interests in property of the Government of North Korea and the Workers' Party of Korea and provides additional criteria for blocking the

property and interests in property of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to operate in such industries in the North Korean economy as may be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, such as transportation, mining, energy, or financial services;
- to have sold, supplied, transferred, or purchased, directly or indirectly, to or from North Korea or any person acting for or on behalf of the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea, metal, graphite, coal, or software, where any revenue or goods received may benefit the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea, including North Korea's nuclear or ballistic missile programs;
- to have engaged in, facilitated, or been responsible for an abuse or violation of human rights by the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea or any person acting for or on behalf of either such entity;
- to have engaged in, facilitated, or been responsible for the exportation of workers from North Korea, including exportation to generate revenue for the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea;
- to have engaged in significant activities undermining cybersecurity through the use of computer networks or systems against targets outside of North Korea on behalf of the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea;
- to have engaged in, facilitated, or been responsible for censorship by the Government of North Korea or the Workers' Party of Korea;
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to have attempted to engage in any of the activities described above.

In addition, the order prohibits:

- the exportation of goods, services, and technology to North Korea;
- new investment in North Korea; and
- the approval, financing, facilitation, or guarantee of such exports and investments.

Finally, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien determined to meet one or more of the above criteria.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All executive agencies are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 15, 2016*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2081. An act to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving the Gibson Dam.

H.R. 3447. An act to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project.

H.R. 3797. An act to establish the bases by which the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall issue, implement, and enforce certain emission limitations and allocations for existing electric utility steam generating units that convert coal refuse into energy.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3797. An act to establish the bases by which the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall issue, implement, and enforce certain emission limitations and allocations for existing electric utility steam generating units that convert coal refuse into energy; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

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

S. 2686. A bill to clarify the treatment of two or more employers as joint employers under the National Labor Relations Act.

The following bills were read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 2081. An act to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving the Gibson Dam.

H.R. 3447. An act to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project.

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–4696. A communication from the Acting Director of the Legislative Affairs Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Conservation Stewardship Program'' (RIN0578–AA63) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4697. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Mark I. Fox, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4698. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Additions to the Entity List'' (RIN0694–AG82) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4699. A communication from the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program, transmitting, pursuant to law, the October 2015 Quarterly Report to Congress of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4700. A communication from the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program, transmitting, pursuant to law, the January 2016 Quarterly Report to Congress of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4701. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''OMB Sequestration Preview Report to the President and Congress for Fiscal Year 2017''; to the Committees on the Budget; and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4702. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Final Report to Congress on the Community First Choice State Plan Benefit''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4703. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Guidance and Transition Relief'' (Notice 2016–22) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4704. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program Eleventh Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4705. A communication from the 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 regarding any possible affects such a sale might have relating to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge over military threats to Israel (OSS–2016–0350); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4706. A communication from the 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 regarding any possible affects such a sale might have relating to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge over military threats to Israel (OSS–2016–0352); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4707. A communication from the 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 regarding any possible affects such a sale might have relating to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge over military threats to Israel (OSS–2016–0351); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4708. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report on mining activities as required by the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4709. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''New Animal Drugs for Use in Animal Feeds; Removal of Obsolete and Redundant Regulations'' (Docket No. FDA–2003–N–0446) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4710. A communication from the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's fiscal year 2015 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4711. A communication from the Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Annual Performance Report for fiscal year 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4712. A communication from the Chairman, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's fiscal year 2015 Performance and Accountability Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4713. A communication from the Executive Director, Mississippi River Commission, Department of the Army, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Annual Report for calendar year 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4714. A communication from the Director of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Rights-of-Way on Indian Land'' (RIN1076–AF20) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC–4715. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Office of Refugee Resettlement: Annual Report to Congress, FY 2014''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4716. A communication from the Supervisory Regulations Specialist, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Improving and Expanding Training Opportunities for F–1 Nonimmigrant Students with STEM Degrees and Cap-Gap Relief for All Eligible F–1 Students'' (RIN1653–AA72) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 11, 2016; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4717. A communication from the Human Resources Specialist (Executive Resources), Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Chief Counsel, Small Business Administration, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC–4718. A communication from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Vet Centers'' (RIN2900–AP21) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 11, 2016; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–4719. A communication from the Chief Impact Analyst, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Veterans Transportation Service'' (RIN2900–AO92) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 11, 2016; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–4720. A communication from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Applicants for VA Memorialization Benefits'' (RIN2900–AO95) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 11, 2016; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–4721. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of the Loess Hills Viticultural Area'' (RIN1513–AC20) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4722. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of the Willamette Valley Viticultural Area'' (RIN1513–AC21) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4723. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Witt-Penn Bridge Construction, Hackensack River; Jersey City, NJ'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2014–1008)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 11, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4724. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Delaware River; Marcus Hook, PA'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2015–0998)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 11, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation .

EC–4725. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Great Egg Harbor Bay; Somers Point, NJ'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2015–1031)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 11, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4726. A communication from the Acting Division Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Implementation of Section 224 of the Act A National Broadband Plan for Our Future'' ((RIN3060–AJ64) (FCC 15–151)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 14, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4727. A communication from the Vice President of Government Affairs and Corporate Communications, National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to Amtrak's Executive Level 1 salary for 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4728. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Margin and Capital Requirements for Covered Swap Entities'' (RIN3064–AE21) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4729. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''OMB Report to the Congress on the Joint Committee Reductions for Fiscal Year 2017''; to the Committees on the Budget; and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4730. A communication from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report related to the Colorado River System Reservoirs for 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–4731. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Transmission Operations Reliability Standards and Interconnection Reliability Operations and Coordination Reliability Standards'' (Docket No. RM15–16–000) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–4732. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Third-Party Provision of Primary Frequency Response Service'' ((RIN1902–AE96) (Docket No. RM15–2–000)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–4733. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to Emergency Operations Reliability Standards; Revisions to Undervoltage Load Shedding Reliability Standards; Revisions to the Definition of 'Remedial Action Scheme' and Related Reliability Standards'' ((RIN1902–AF06) (Docket Nos. RM15–7–000, RM15–12–000 , and RM15–13–000)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–4734. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revised Critical Infrastructure Protection Reliability Standards'' (Docket No. RM15–14–000) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–4735. A communication from the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Clean Watersheds Needs Survey 2012 Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4736. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Evaluation of the Medicare Patient Intravenous Immunoglobulin Demonstration Project: Interim Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4737. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, nine (9) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of State, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4738. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0001)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4739. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0001)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4740. A communication from the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's fiscal year 2015 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act) received in the office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4741. A communication from the Director of the Office of Financial Reporting and Policy, Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''FY 2015 Agency Financial Report''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4742. A communication from the Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4743. A communication from the Chief Financial Officer of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to financial integrity for fiscal year 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4744. A communication from the Director, Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's fiscal year 2015 report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4745. A communication from the Board Members of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4746. A communication from the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits'' (29 CFR Part 4022) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4747. A joint communication from the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to Thefts, Losses, or Releases of Select Agents and Toxins for Calendar Year 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4748. A communication from the Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the cost of response and recovery efforts for FEMA–3375-EM in the State of Michigan having exceeded the $5,000,000 limit for a single emergency declaration; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4749. A communication from the Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report of the Proceedings of the Judicial Conference of the United States'' for the September 17, 2015, session and September 9, 2015, session; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4750. A communication from the Chief Counsel, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendments to 47 CFR Part 301 to Implement Certain Provisions of the Spectrum Pipeline Act'' (RIN0660–AA31) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4751. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Procurement, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''NASA Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: NASA Capitalization Threshold'' (RIN2700–AE23) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2016; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–135. A concurrent memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona urging the United States Congress to enact legislation to repeal the health insurance tax; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2001

Whereas, sections 9010 and 10905 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111–148) and section 1406 of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (P.L. 111–152) impose an unprecedented new tax on health insurance that numerous policy experts agree will be passed on to individuals, working families, small employers and seniors, contradicting a primary goal of health reform by making care more expensive; and

Whereas, the health insurance tax will cause premiums on the individual market to rise an average of $2,150 for individuals and $5,080 for families nationally over a ten-year period, will increase premiums in Arizona by an average of $1,964 over ten years and will increase premiums for families in Arizona over $3,958 over ten years; and

Whereas, the health insurance tax will impact small employers over the next ten years by reducing future private sector jobs by 125,000, with 59% of these reductions affecting small businesses, and reducing potential sales by at least $18 billion, with 50% affecting small businesses; and

Whereas, the health insurance tax will increase premiums for small employers in Arizona by an average of $2,674 per employee over ten years and for large employers by an average of $2,645 per employee over ten years; and

Whereas, the health insurance tax will impact Medicare Advantage beneficiaries in Arizona by costing an average of $3,303 more in premiums and reduced benefits over ten years; and

Whereas, the health insurance tax will impact Medicaid beneficiaries in Arizona who are enrolled in a coordinated care program by costing an average of $1,337 over ten years, putting pressure on already strained state budgets, decreasing benefits and potentially creating coverage disruption; and

Whereas, higher premiums are a disincentive for everyone to obtain insurance coverage, particularly younger, healthier people who are likely to drop their policy if it becomes too expensive, which would further erode the risk pool and make coverage even less affordable.

Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

1. That the United States Congress enact legislation to repeal the health insurance tax, sections 9010 and 10905 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and section 1406 of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, to make health care more affordable for working families, individuals and businesses.

2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies of this Memorial to the President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate and each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona.

POM–136. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Michigan memorializing the United States Congress to appropriate funds from the Nuclear Waste Fund for the establishment of a permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste or reimburse electric utility customers who paid into the fund; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Whereas, The nuclear power industry needs a permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste produced by reactors. Nuclear power plays a vital role in meeting our nation's current and future energy needs. However, the failure to construct a permanent repository severely impedes efforts to construct new power plants to provide clean and reliable base load power; and

Whereas, Over the last 30 years, the nuclear power industry and its customers have paid the federal government billions of dollars to construct a permanent repository. Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, the U.S. Congress established the Nuclear Waste Fund to collect money for the repository. Revenue to the fund came from mandatory fees assessed on all nuclear energy. Since 1983, customers of Michigan electric utilities alone have paid $812 million into the fund for construction of the repository; and

Whereas, A permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste has not been established and constructed. More than 2,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel from power plants continue to accumulate at temporary and potentially vulnerable sites across the nation,

adding to the more than 70,000 metric tons already stored at these sites; and

Whereas, The Nuclear Waste Fund contains a substantial balance for establishment of the repository. While fee collection was suspended on May 16, 2014, the fund still contains a balance of over $31 billion for the express purpose of supporting radioactive waste disposal activities. It is imperative that Congress meet its obligation to the nuclear power industry and U.S. citizens who paid into this fund: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to appropriate funds from the Nuclear Waste Fund for the establishment of a permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste or reimburse electric utility customers who paid into the fund; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM–137. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Michigan urging the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to fulfill their obligation to establish a permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 8

Whereas, Over the past four decades, nuclear power has been a significant source for the nation's electricity production. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, nuclear power provided about 20 percent of the electricity produced in the United States in 2013, and Michigan's three nuclear power plants provided 28 percent of the electricity generated in Michigan; and

Whereas, Since the earliest days of nuclear power, the great dilemma associated with this technology is how to deal with used nuclear fuel. Currently, more than 70,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel are stored in pools or casks at temporary sites around the country, including Michigan. This high-level radioactive waste demands exceptional care in all facets of its storage and disposal, including transportation; and

Whereas, More than 30 years ago, Congress enacted the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to address this issue. The act requires the federal government, through the Department of Energy, to build a repository for the permanent storage of high-level radioactive waste from nuclear power plants and begin accepting waste by January 31, 1998; and

Whereas, It is now 2015, and the nation still remains without a permanent repository, despite billions of dollars collected from electric ratepayers for the project. Spent nuclear fuel continues to pile up at temporary sites around the country, and the ongoing problem of permanent disposal is a drag on the potential of the nuclear power industry to meet our nation's energy needs. There is only so long that our nation can continue to safely store this waste at temporary sites; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we urge the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to fulfill their obligation, as provided by law, to establish a permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of Energy, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 818. A bill to amend the Grand Ronde Reservation Act to make technical corrections, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–230).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 368. A resolution supporting efforts by the Government of Colombia to pursue peace and the end of the country's enduring internal armed conflict and recognizing United States support for Colombia at the 15th anniversary of Plan Colombia.

S. Res. 375. A resolution raising awareness of modern slavery.

S. Res. 378. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the courageous work and life of Russian opposition leader Boris Yefimovich Nemtsov and renewing the call for a full and transparent investigation into the tragic murder of Boris Yefimovich Nemtsov in Moscow on February 27, 2015.

S. Res. 383. A resolution recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and with an amended preamble:

S. Res. 388. A resolution supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 392. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the prosecution and conviction of former President Mohamed Nasheed without due process and urging the Government of the Maldives to take all necessary steps to redress this injustice, to release all political prisoners, and to ensure due process and freedom from political prosecution for all the people of the Maldives.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. THUNE for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Coast Guard nomination of Rear Adm. Karl L. Schultz, to be Vice Admiral.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mrs. ERNST (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 2688. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 615 6th Avenue SE in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, as the ''Sergeant First Class Terryl L. Pasker Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 2689. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to cellular therapies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. FISCHER, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2690. A bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to modernize the funding of wildlife conservation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 2691. A bill to require the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to establish a pilot program for the adoption and use of certified electronic health records technology; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 2692. A bill to counter foreign disinformation and propaganda, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. ALEXANDER:

S. 2693. A bill to ensure the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission allocates its resources appropriately by prioritizing complaints of discrimination before implementing the proposed revision of the employer information report EEO–1, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 2694. A bill to ensure America's law enforcement officers have access to lifesaving equipment needed to defend themselves and civilians from attacks by terrorists and violent criminals; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 2695. A bill to permit voluntary economic activity; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 2696. A bill to provide small businesses with a grace period for a regulatory violation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2697. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and the Portal-to-Portal Act of 1947 to prevent wage theft and assist in the recovery of stolen wages, to authorize the Secretary of Labor to administer grants to prevent wage and hour violations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 2698. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude certain health arrangements from the excise tax on employer-sponsored health coverage; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2699. A bill to increase the rates of pay under the General Schedule and other statutory pay systems and for prevailing rate employees by 5.3 percent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. Res. 401. A resolution designating March 22, 2016, as ''National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. REID):

S. Res. 402. A resolution to authorize testimony, documentary production, and representation in United States of America v. Chaka Fattah, Sr., et al; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 386

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 386, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 553

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 553, a bill to marshal resources to undertake a concerted, transformative effort that seeks to bring an end to modern slavery, and for other purposes.

S. 624

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

S. 713

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 713, a bill to prevent international violence against women, and for other purposes.

S. 752

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 752, a bill to establish a scorekeeping rule to ensure that increases in guarantee fees of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac shall not be used to offset provisions that increase the deficit.

S. 911

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 911, a bill to direct the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue an order with respect to secondary cockpit barriers, and for other purposes.

S. 1252

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1252, a bill to authorize a comprehensive strategic approach for United States foreign assistance to developing countries to reduce global poverty and hunger, achieve food and nutrition security, promote inclusive, sustainable, agricultural-led economic growth, improve nutritional outcomes, especially for women and children, build resilience among vulnerable populations, and for other purposes.

S. 1641

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1641, a bill to improve the use by the Department of Veterans Affairs of opioids in treating veterans, to improve patient advocacy by the Department, and to expand availability of complementary and integrative health, and for other purposes.

S. 1944

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1944, a bill to require each agency to repeal or amend 1 or more rules before issuing or amending a rule.

S. 2179

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2179, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into certain agreements with non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers if the Secretary is not feasibly able to provide health care in facilities of the Department or through contracts or sharing agreements, and for other purposes.

S. 2218

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2218, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain amounts paid for physical activity, fitness, and exercise as amounts paid for medical care.

S. 2403

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2403, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide a period for the relocation of spouses and dependents of certain members of the Armed Forces undergoing a permanent change of station in order to ease and facilitate the relocation of military families, and for other purposes.

S. 2502

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2502, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to ensure that retirement investors receive advice in their best interests, and for other purposes.

S. 2531

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2531, a bill to authorize State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in commerce-related or investment-related boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 2551

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2551, a bill to help prevent acts of genocide and mass atrocities, which threaten national and international security, by enhancing United States civilian capacities to prevent and mitigate such crises.

S. 2621

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2621, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to genetically engineered food transparency and uniformity.

S. 2630

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2630, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to require certain disclosures be included on employee pay stubs, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 140

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 140, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

S. RES. 375

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 375, a resolution raising awareness of modern slavery.

S. RES. 378

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 378, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the courageous work and life of Russian opposition leader Boris Yefimovich Nemtsov and renewing the call for a full and transparent investigation into the tragic murder of Boris Yefimovich Nemtsov in Moscow on February 27, 2015.

AMENDMENT NO. 3450

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3450 proposed to S. 764, a bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 401—DESIGNATING MARCH 22, 2016, AS ''NATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS APPRECIATION DAY''

Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. CASEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 401

Whereas rehabilitation counselors conduct assessments, provide counseling, support families, and plan and implement rehabilitation programs for individuals in need of rehabilitation;

Whereas the purpose of professional organizations for rehabilitation counseling and education is to promote the improvement of rehabilitation services available to individuals with disabilities through quality education for counselors and rehabilitation research;

Whereas various professional organizations have vigorously advocated for up-to-date education and training and the maintenance of professional standards in the field of rehabilitation counseling and education, including—

(1) the National Rehabilitation Association;

(2) the Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association;

(3) the National Council on Rehabilitation Education;

(4) the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association;

(5) the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association;

(6) the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification;

(7) the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation; and

(8) the Council on Rehabilitation Education;

Whereas, on March 22, 1983, the president of the National Council on Rehabilitation Education testified before the Subcommittee on Select Education of the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives and was instrumental in bringing the need for qualified rehabilitation counselors to the attention of Congress; and

Whereas rehabilitation counselors with credentials may provide a higher quality of service to individuals in need of rehabilitation and the development of accreditation systems for rehabilitation counselors supports the continued education of such counselors: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 22, 2016, as ''National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day''; and

(2) commends—

(A) rehabilitation counselors for the dedication and hard work rehabilitation counselors provide to individuals in need of rehabilitation; and

(B) professional organizations for the efforts professional organizations have made to assist those individuals who require rehabilitation.

SENATE RESOLUTION 402—TO AUTHORIZE TESTIMONY, DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION, AND REPRESENTATION IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. CHAKA FATTAH, SR., ET AL

Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. REID) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 402

Whereas, in the case of *United States of America v. Chaka Fattah, Sr., et al.*, Cr. No. 15–346, pending in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, testimony may be needed from Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr., relating to his official responsibilities;

Whereas, by Rule VI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no Senator shall absent himself from the service of the Senate without leave;

Whereas, by the privileges of the Senate of the United States and Rule XI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may, by the judicial or administrative process, be taken from such control or possession but by permission of the Senate;

Whereas, pursuant to sections 703(a) and 704(a)(2) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, 2 U.S.C. §§ 288b(a) and 288c(a)(2), the Senate may direct its counsel to represent Members of the Senate with respect to any subpoena, order, or request for testimony relating to their official responsibilities; and

Whereas, when it appears that evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may promote the administration of justice, the Senate will take such action as will promote the ends of justice consistent with the privileges of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr., is authorized to testify and to produce documents in the case of *United States of America v. Chaka Fattah, Sr., et al.*, except when his attendance at the Senate is necessary for the performance of his legislative duties, and except concerning matters for which a privilege should be asserted.

SEC. 2. The Senate Legal Counsel is authorized to represent Senator Casey in connection with the testimony authorized in section one of this resolution.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3455. Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. CARPER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3450 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. ROBERTS) to the bill S. 764, to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3456. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. BURR (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1831, to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3455. Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. CARPER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3450 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. ROBERTS) to the bill S. 764, to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 4, strike line 17 and all that follows through page 5, line 4, and insert the following:

''(D) require that, if a food is voluntarily labeled under this section, the label shall—

''(i) clearly indicate to consumers that more information is available regarding the ingredients of the food;

''(ii) contain an approved form of electronic disclosure, such as a scannable image, code, Internet website link, or other similar technology, that provides direct access to information regarding whether the food is—

''(I) bioengineered; or

''(II) developed or produced using bioengineering; and

''(iii) contain a telephone number that provides direct access to information regarding whether the food is—

''(I) bioengineered; or

''(II) developed or produced using bioengineering.

Beginning on page 6, strike line 22 and all that follows through page 7, line 5, and insert the following:

quently consumed labeled foods through means other than the label or labeling that—

''(A) are clear and direct; and

''(B) would allow consumers to access the information as described in section 293(b)(2)(D).

On page 7, line 24, strike ''70 percent'' and insert ''80 percent''.

On page 10, strike lines 1 through 9 and insert the following:

''(ii) clear and direct means, other than the label or labeling, including—

''(I) an approved form of electronic disclosure, such as a scannable image, code, Internet website link, social media, or other similar technology, that provides direct access to information regarding whether the food is—

''(aa) bioengineered; or

''(bb) developed or produced using bioengineering; and

''(II) a telephone number that provides direct access to information regarding whether the food is—

''(aa) bioengineered; or

''(bb) developed or produced using bioengineering.

On page 13, strike line 19 and insert the following:

duced using genetic engineering.

''SEC. 296. NO PREEMPTION OF COMMON LAW OR STATUTORY CAUSES OF ACTION.

''Nothing in this subtitle or subtitle E (or any regulation promulgated pursuant to this subtitle or subtitle E) preempts, displaces, or supplants—

''(1) any common law right; or

''(2) any Federal or State law creating a remedy for civil relief, including for civil damage or penalty for criminal conduct.''.

SA 3456. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. BURR (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1831, to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016''.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.

There is established in the executive branch a commission to be known as the

''Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking'' (in this Act referred to as the ''Commission'').

SEC. 3. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall be comprised of 15 members as follows:

(1) Three shall be appointed by the President, of whom—

(A) one shall be an academic researcher, data expert, or have experience in administering programs;

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization; and

(C) one shall be the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (or the Director's designee).

(2) Three shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, of whom—

(A) two shall be academic researchers, data experts, or have experience in administering programs; and

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization.

(3) Three shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, of whom—

(A) two shall be academic researchers, data experts, or have experience in administering programs; and

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization.

(4) Three shall be appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate, of whom—

(A) two shall be academic researchers, data experts, or have experience in administering programs; and

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization.

(5) Three shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, of whom—

(A) two shall be academic researchers, data experts, or have experience in administering programs; and

(B) one shall be an expert in protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization.

(b) EXPERTISE.—In making appointments under this section, consideration should be given to individuals with expertise in economics, statistics, program evaluation, data security, confidentiality, or database management.

(c) CHAIRPERSON AND CO-CHAIRPERSON.—The President shall select the chairperson of the Commission and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall select the co-chairperson.

(d) TIMING OF APPOINTMENTS.—Appointments to the Commission shall be made not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(e) TERMS; VACANCIES.—Each member shall be appointed for the duration of the Commission. Any vacancy in the Commission shall not affect its powers, and shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(f) COMPENSATION.—Members of the Commission shall serve without pay.

(g) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Commission.

SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) STUDY OF DATA.—The Commission shall conduct a comprehensive study of the data inventory, data infrastructure, database security, and statistical protocols related to Federal policymaking and the agencies responsible for maintaining that data to—

(1) determine the optimal arrangement for which administrative data on Federal programs and tax expenditures, survey data, and related statistical data series may be integrated and made available to facilitate program evaluation, continuous improvement, policy-relevant research, and cost-benefit analyses by qualified researchers and institutions while weighing how integration might lead to the intentional or unintentional access, breach, or release of personally-identifiable information or records;

(2) make recommendations on how data infrastructure, database security, and statistical protocols should be modified to best fulfill the objectives identified in paragraph (1); and

(3) make recommendations on how best to incorporate outcomes measurement, institutionalize randomized controlled trials, and rigorous impact analysis into program design.

(b) CLEARINGHOUSE.—In undertaking the study required by subsection (a), the Commission shall—

(1) consider whether a clearinghouse for program and survey data should be established and how to create such a clearinghouse; and

(2) evaluate—

(A) what administrative data and survey data are relevant for program evaluation and Federal policy-making and should be included in a potential clearinghouse;

(B) which survey data the administrative data identified in subparagraph (A) may be linked to, in addition to linkages across administrative data series, including the effect such linkages may have on the security of those data;

(C) what are the legal and administrative barriers to including or linking these data series;

(D) what data-sharing infrastructure should be used to facilitate data merging and access for research purposes;

(E) how a clearinghouse could be self-funded;

(F) which types of researchers, officials, and institutions should have access to data and what the qualifications of the researchers, officials, and institutions should be;

(G) what limitations should be placed on the use of data provided;

(H) how to protect information and ensure individual privacy and confidentiality;

(I) how data and results of research can be used to inform program administrators and policymakers to improve program design;

(J) what incentives may facilitate interagency sharing of information to improve programmatic effectiveness and enhance data accuracy and comprehensiveness; and

(K) how individuals whose data are used should be notified of its usages.

(c) REPORT.—Upon the affirmative vote of at least three-quarters of the members of the Commission, the Commission shall submit to the President and Congress a detailed statement of its findings and conclusions as a result of the activities required by subsections (a) and (b), together with its recommendations for such legislation or administrative actions as the Commission considers appropriate in light of the results of the study.

(d) DEADLINE.—The report under subsection (c) shall be submitted not later than the date that is 15 months after the date a majority of the members of the Commission are appointed pursuant to section 3.

(e) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''administrative data'' means data—

(1) held by an agency or a contractor or grantee of an agency (including a State or unit of local government); and

(2) collected for other than statistical purposes.

SEC. 5. OPERATION AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) EXECUTIVE BRANCH ASSISTANCE.—The heads of the following agencies shall advise and consult with the Commission on matters within their respective areas of responsibility:

(1) The Bureau of the Census.

(2) The Internal Revenue Service.

(3) The Department of Health and Human Services.

(4) The Department of Agriculture.

(5) The Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(6) The Social Security Administration.

(7) The Department of Education.

(8) The Department of Justice.

(9) The Office of Management and Budget.

(10) The Bureau of Economic Analysis.

(11) The Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(12) Any other agency, as determined by the Commission.

(b) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet not later than 30 days after the date upon which a majority of its members have been appointed and at such times thereafter as the chairperson or co-chairperson shall determine.

(c) RULES OF PROCEDURE.—The chairperson and co-chairperson shall, with the approval of a majority of the members of the Commission, establish written rules of procedure for the Commission, which shall include a quorum requirement to conduct the business of the Commission.

(d) HEARINGS.—The Commission may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold hearings, sit and act at times and places, take testimony, and receive evidence as the Commission considers appropriate.

(e) CONTRACTS.—The Commission may contract with and compensate government and private agencies or persons for any purpose necessary to enable it to carry out this Act.

(f) MAILS.—The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other agencies of the Federal Government.

(g) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

SEC. 6. FUNDING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b) and the availability of appropriations—

(1) at the request of the Director of the Census, the agencies identified as ''Principal Statistical Agencies'' in the report, published by the Office of Management and Budget, entitled ''Statistical Programs of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2015'' shall transfer funds, as specified in advance in appropriations Acts and in a total amount not to exceed $3,000,000, to the Bureau of the Census for purposes of carrying out the activities of the Commission as provided in this Act; and

(2) the Bureau of the Census shall provide administrative support to the Commission, which may include providing physical space at, and access to, the headquarters of the Bureau of the Census, located in Suitland, Maryland.

(b) PROHIBITION ON NEW FUNDING.—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act. This Act shall be carried out using amounts otherwise available for the Bureau of the Census or the agencies described in subsection (a)(1).

SEC. 7. PERSONNEL.

(a) DIRECTOR.—The Commission shall have a Director who shall be appointed by the chairperson with the concurrence of the co-chairperson. The Director shall be paid at a rate of pay established by the chairperson and co-chairperson, not to exceed the annual

rate of basic pay payable for level V of the Executive Schedule (section 5316 of title 5, United States Code).

(b) STAFF.—The Director may appoint and fix the pay of additional staff as the Director considers appropriate.

(c) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—The Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay for a comparable position paid under the General Schedule.

SEC. 8. TERMINATION.

The Commission shall terminate not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 16, 2016, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 16, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 16, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, ''The 2016 Water Resources Development Act—Policies and Projects.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 16, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. 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 March 16, 2016, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''DHS Management and Acquisition Reform.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 16, 2016, at 2 p.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Preventing America's Looming Fiscal Crisis: the Need for a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution.''

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 16, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–G50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Airland of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 16, 2016, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND NATIONAL INTEREST

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 16, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Impact of High Levels of Immigration on U.S. Workers.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Deanna Mitchell, a National Park Service detailee in the office of Senator MURKOWSKI, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this calendar year.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. RES. 377

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12:45 p.m., Thursday, March 17, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 375, S. Res. 377; further, that there be 1 hour of debate equally divided in the usual form; further, that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on adoption of the resolution with no intervening action or debate; finally, if adopted, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1890

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5 p.m., Monday, April 4, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 355, S. 1890; further, that there be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form; further, that following the use or yielding back of time, the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with no intervening action or debate; further, if passed, that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING COMMISSION ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1831, which was received from the House.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1831) to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Burr substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 3456) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 1831), as amended, was passed.

CAPTAIN JOHN E. MORAN AND CAPTAIN WILLIAM WYLIE GALT ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be discharged from further consideration of S. 719 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 719) to rename the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Great Falls, Montana, the Captain John E. Moran and Captain William Wylie Galt Armed Forces Reserve Center.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 719) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 719

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

SECTION 1. RENAMING OF THE ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER IN GREAT FALLS, MONTANA, AS THE CAPTAIN JOHN E. MORAN AND CAPTAIN WILLIAM WYLIE GALT ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER.

(a) RENAMING.—The Armed Forces Reserve Center in Great Falls, Montana, shall hereafter be known and designated as the ''Captain John E. Moran and Captain William Wylie Galt Armed Forces Reserve Center''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, map, regulation, map, document, paper, other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Captain John E. Moran and Captain William Wylie Galt Armed Forces Reserve Center.

NATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 401, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 401) designating March 22, 2016, as ''National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 401) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

AUTHORIZING TESTIMONY, DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION, AND REPRESENTATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 402, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 402) to authorize testimony, documentary production, and representation in United States of America v. Chaka Fattah, Sr., et al.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this resolution concerns a criminal case pending in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania involving Congressman CHAKA FATTAH, Sr., and others, including an individual named Herbert Vederman. The Department of Justice is seeking trial testimony from Senator BOB CASEY about his office's receipt of a letter of support from the Congressman regarding Mr. Vederman's consideration for appointment to a high Federal office.

The government alleges that Congressman FATTAH conspired with Mr. Vederman to advocate for Mr. Vederman's appointment in return for Mr. Vederman providing money and things of value to the Congressman.

The indictment does not allege that any action was taken in response to this advocacy, and Mr. Vederman did not receive a nomination for any Federal position. Senator CASEY is being called as a witness only because of the fact of his office's receipt of this letter supporting Mr. Vederman.

Senator CASEY would like to cooperate with the government's request for his appearance at trial. Accordingly, consistent with the rules of the Senate and Senate practice, the enclosed resolution would authorize Senator CASEY to testify and to produce documents at trial. The resolution would also authorize the Senate legal counsel to represent Senator CASEY in connection with his testimony.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 402) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 17; 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; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, until 12:45 p.m.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator LANKFORD.

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

The Senator from Oklahoma.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, upon waking this morning, like a lot of other people did, I put on the news. About midway through the morning, about 7 a.m., a bulletin came out that the President had selected a nominee for the Supreme Court. Newsworthy.

At about 7 a.m., the email came out that said: ''I've made my decision.''

At 7:07 this morning, White House Legislative Affairs circulated a notification to all those folks on Capitol Hill, including our office, from President Obama that stated this fact: ''We've reached out to every member of the Senate, who each have a responsibility to do their job and take this nomination just as seriously.''

Well, this Senator thought that was very interesting because we hadn't received a notification.

At 7:14 a.m., 7 minutes later, the White House Legislative Affairs Office emailed my chief of staff with an attachment of the 7:07 a.m. email from the White House notifying that they had this. So when my counsel called over to the White House Counsel and said: You stated earlier this morning that you contacted our offices—''you have reached out to us'' was the term—they clarified later in the morning: Well, that email we sent after we said we contacted you was really the contact that we meant to send earlier.

This was quite a morning for us. It is again the same doublespeak we received from the White House. When he said that they had reached out to all Members of the Senate, that actually means they had sent us an email after they had sent the American people an email saying they had made a decision. But even that email didn't say who it was.

Here is the challenge. It is a constitutional responsibility here, and it is extremely important that all of this is done right. It is extremely important that article I, the legislative branch, and that article II, the White House, agree on a Supreme Court nominee because article I and article II select article III judges to the Supreme Court.

A month ago, the U.S. Senate—the Members of the majority party notified the White House and the American people that we wanted to follow the same

historical precedent that has been followed for decades, saying that in an election year, we would not appoint someone to the Supreme Court. This is not a new policy; it is a policy that has been around for a very long time. In fact, in 1968, when Democrats had the Senate and a Democrat, LBJ, was in the White House, the Democrat, LBJ, wanted to be able to appoint a Supreme Court nominee, and Democrats in the Senate blocked someone from their own party from putting up a Supreme Court nominee because it was an election year, and they held it. It has happened over and over again.

In fact, it has been interesting, because on this floor I heard numerous folks step up and say: This is unprecedented. This is new. This has never happened before.

The problem is that all of us know the history. It is the same history all of us look at.

The Washington Post this morning even put out a piece identifying this basic issue. They occasionally do what has been called the Pinocchio test, and this morning they identified multiple different Democratic Senators who have spoken on this floor saying things such as ''Republican Members met behind closed doors to unilaterally decide, without any input from this committee, that this committee and the Senate as a whole will refuse to consider any nominee. It's a dereliction of our constitutional duty.''

Another statement: ''The Senate shall advise and consent by voting on that nominee. That is what the plain language of the Constitution requires.''

Over and over again this has come up.

The Washington Post went back and researched and did an extensive piece detailing all the real history here of Supreme Court nominees, and they ended with this statement: ''[But] the Senate majority can in effect do what it wants'' to do, as it has historically, ''unless it becomes politically uncomfortable. Democrats who suggest otherwise are simply telling supporters a politically convenient fairy tale.''

The Washington Post gave the Democrats who made all these statements about the Republicans doing something unprecedented in shutting down this process a whopping three Pinocchios in their test in the Washington Post this morning.

This is not something new or radical; this is consistent. Quite frankly, the Constitution—article II, Section 2—sets up a 50/50 proposition for the selection of Supreme Court Justices. The White House has the first 50 percent to make that nomination, and the Senate has the second 50 percent in that we have what is called advice and consent, and that is choosing the time and person in the process. Is this the right time to do this nominee? Is this nominee the right person? That is advice and consent.

It is not new for the White House and the Senate to disagree on this. George Washington couldn't even get some of his nominees through the very first Senate, and he personally came over to the Senate, bringing his nominee, and said: I want my nominee to have a hearing. And the very first Senate, with the very first President—the very first Senate sent George Washington away and said: We are not going to hear it today. It is the wrong time and maybe the wrong person. We haven't decided yet.

This is an ongoing process. This Senate has determined, as it has many times, that an election year is the wrong time to have a departing President choose a Supreme Court nominee.

As many folks have said over and over again, this is not only old history in the United States, it is recent history. At that time, Senator BIDEN, who was the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said on this floor in 1992:

> The Senate, too, Mr. President, must consider how it would respond to a Supreme Court vacancy that would occur in the full throes of an election year. It is my view that if the President goes the way of Presidents Fillmore and Johnson—

Referring to LBJ—

> and presses an election year nomination, the Senate Judiciary Committee should seriously consider not scheduling confirmation hearings on the nomination until after the political campaign season is over.
>
> It would be our pragmatic conclusion that once the political season is underway, and it is, action on a Supreme Court nomination must be put off until after the election campaign is over. That is what is fair to the nominee and is central to the process. Otherwise, it seems to me, Mr. President, we will be in deep trouble as an institution.
>
> Others may fret that this approach would leave the Court with only eight members for some time, but as I see it, Mr. President, the cost of such a result, the need to reargue three or four cases that will divide the Justices four to four, are quite minor compared to the cost that a nominee, the President, the Senate, and the Nation would have to pay for what would assuredly be a bitter fight, no matter how good a person is nominated by the President, if that nomination were to take place in the next several weeks.

Even Senator REID in 2005 said:

> The duties of the Senate are set forth in the U.S. Constitution. Nowhere in that document does it say the Senate has a duty to give Presidential appointees a vote.

This is not new; it has just become politically expedient to bring this up. It is not even new in the media. It was interesting to be able to see a comment in the New York Times from 1987 when the New York Times wrote an editorial about what happens if a President in his final term wants to be able to appoint a nominee with a Senate majority from the other party. Well, at that time in the previous election, the White House had a President who was a Republican, Ronald Reagan, and the Senate had changed over to the Democrats in the previous election. The New York Times wrote this about a Supreme Court selection process:

> The President's supporters insisted vehemently that having won the 1984 election, he has every right to change the Court's direction. Yes, but the Democrats won the 1986 election regaining control of the Senate, and they have every right to resist.

That was true then for the New York Times, that is true now, and we will see if they stay consistent as a newspaper standing from the exact same principle decades later—not new, not different.

The fact is, the Supreme Court is still working, still hearing cases, still going through the arguments, and still releasing opinions. Nothing has changed over there. The work is still continuing in the U.S. Senate. We are still hearing legislation. We are voting on legislation. We voted on a confirmation this week to the Department of Education. We are still working through nominations. We are still working through legislation. Nothing has changed on that. The decision was made that this Senate will not move during this election year.

It is interesting. I had a telephone townhall this Monday with individuals across my State, with thousands of people on the line. We asked a simple question about what should happen in this process dealing with the Supreme Court—this is before a nominee was even announced—and 71 percent of the people on our calls said the next President and the American people should choose who the next Supreme Court Justice will be.

I will submit that we should allow the people to decide this, that when they decide the Presidential election this November, they are also determining the direction of the Supreme Court in the days ahead.

I don't want us to lose track of the basic facts here, but I also want us to stay focused. This Senate cannot get distracted with bitter fighting over something that we resolved a month ago and that will remain resolved. We are not going to move.

We have a lot of budget issues to deal with. We have appropriations bills that will come up in the days ahead. I would submit that one of the biggest things we can do in the Senate is to also reform the budget process, to stay focused on things that are really going to matter long term for us, because this issue with the Supreme Court is already resolved. We need to find ways to be able to eliminate the budget gimmicks that are in the budget process to get a long-term view, to make sure there is not this playing with the system in this 10-year window, and to deal with biennial budgeting to get a better prediction of where we are going in the days ahead. We need to find a way to stop government shutdowns and the constant threats of government shutdowns because they do nothing but hurt us. These are things we can work on and work on together to keep us on focus.

The Supreme Court issue is settled. It is not going to move. Let's find the things that we can agree on, that we can work on, and continue to work on those things together.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:44 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 17, 2016, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nomination received by the Senate:

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

MERRICK B. GARLAND, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, VICE ANTONIN SCALIA, DECEASED.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

BLEEDING DISORDERS AWARENESS MONTH

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, March 2016 marks the 30th anniversary of President Ronald Reagan's one-time declaration of March 1986 as Hemophilia Awareness Month. The goal of Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month, as we now call it, is to augment awareness of hemophilia and all inheritable bleeding disorders, which unfortunately have no cure in sight. These incurable, hereditary disorders affect millions of Americans each day. Roughly 1 million Americans suffer from Von Willebrand disease (VMD), a genetic bleeding disorder which prevents blood from clotting properly due to a defective blood protein, and around 20,000 are affected by hemophilia, a rare genetic bleeding disorder that prevents blood from clotting properly—for people with hemophilia, a simple cut can be life-threatening. Consequently, treatment is costly; it involves life-long infusions of clotting factor therapies which serve as a replacement for missing or deficient blood clotting proteins.

Although treatment for Americans affected by bleeding disorders can be costly, it has improved immensely. Given the tremendous advances in treating hemophilia, with proper treatment and self-care, most people with hemophilia can maintain an active, productive lifestyle. However, the costs of treatment for individuals with inherited bleeding disorders can still be improved with increased awareness, research, and education.

For instance, the CDC Division of Blood Disorders conducts Hemophilia Treatment Center research and this research recently resulted in a more effective test for inhibitors, a complication of hemophilia. Medical innovations like this are made possible through extensive research and are an effective means to reduce treatment costs and increase diagnoses for individuals with hemophilia and related inherited blood issues. Awareness, research, and education are some of the most effective ways to improve care for Americans with inherited bleeding disorders and Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month helps elevate all three.

HONORING CSUCI PRESIDENT DR. RICHARD RUSH

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Dr. Richard R. Rush, a remarkable visionary and extraordinary leader in our community. Dr. Rush has served as the inaugural President of California State University Channel Islands for the past 15 years, and has dedicated himself to higher education as both an educator and administrator for over 40 years. As the founding President of California State University Channel Islands, Dr. Rush played a vital role in the growth and development of Ventura County's first four-year public university.

Since his first day as President, Dr. Rush has sought to ensure that the students of California State University Channel Islands receive a world-class college education. Dr. Rush developed programs that have positively shaped the identity and commitment of the university to students of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Thanks to his outreach to underserved students in the community, California State University Channel Islands earned the federal designation of a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Furthermore, a cornerstone of Dr. Rush's time at California State University Channel Islands has been building meaningful and significant partnerships throughout the community. From forging relationships with Cottage Hospital, which led to the expansion of the nursing program, to developing a cooperative agreement with the Channel Islands National Park, which began the establishment of the Santa Rosa Island Research Station, Dr. Rush has been a strong leader in creating local working partnerships that will continue on as his legacy. Acting as a collaborative relationship builder, he sought partnerships with businesses in the community to ensure a strong curriculum and create greater learning opportunities for students.

Dr. Rush exemplifies true visionary leadership and is a treasure to our community. Throughout his lifetime dedication to higher education, Dr. Rush has been recognized with accolades regionally and nationally, including the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' President's Award, the California State Student Association's President of the Year Award, and the Distinguished Community Leader Award from the Ventura County Leadership Academy.

I graciously applaud Dr. Rush for his dedication to California State University Channel Islands, and to Ventura County as a whole. It has been my great honor to work with Dr. Rush throughout the years. The legacy Dr. Rush has built extends past the university and well into the roots of our community. I thank him for being instrumental in creating an institution of higher education in Ventura County that will educate generations to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 14 and Tuesday, March 15, I was unavoidably detained in my Congressional district. As a result, I missed the following recorded votes:

On roll call Number 111, passage of S. 2426, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 112, passage of House Concurrent Resolution 75. As a cosponsor, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 113, passage of House Concurrent Resolution 121. As a strong supporter, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

I am pleased that my colleagues in the House voted unanimously to condemn those who commit genocide against Christians, and call these actions exactly what they are, war crimes. It is my sincere desire that both houses of Congress and the President would speak and act with a unified voice against the atrocities that are being committed against Christians in the Middle East by the Islamic State and other terrorist organizations on a daily basis.

On roll call Number 114, ordering the previous question of House Resolution 640, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 115, agreeing to House Resolution 640, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 116, passage of H.R. 2081, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 117, passage of H.R. 3447, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 118, adoption of an amendment to H.R. 3797, had I been present I would have voted "no."

On roll call Number 119, adoption of an amendment to H.R. 3797, had I been present I would have voted "no."

On roll call Number 120, adoption of an amendment to H.R. 3797, had I been present I would have voted "no."

On roll call Number 121, adoption of an amendment to H.R. 3797, had I been present I would have voted "no."

On roll call Number 122, motion to recommit H.R. 3797 with instructions, had I been present I would have voted "no."

On roll call Number 123, passage of H.R. 3797, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

VETERANS WHO RETURN HOME WITH THE MENTAL WOUNDS OF WAR

SPEECH OF

HON. RYAN A. COSTELLO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last year, Congress took an important step towards improving mental health services for our veterans. The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act was a landmark, bipartisan effort that improved suicide prevention programs and mental health care at the Department of Veterans

Affairs (VA). I was proud to cosponsor and to vote in support of that legislation, but more needs to be done.

You do not have to look hard to see the need for critical mental health care and services for our veterans. Among servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, nearly 20% suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or depression, and during deployment, 18.5% report experiencing a traumatic brain injury (TBI). However, only 50% of servicemembers seek treatment. As a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am working tirelessly to help those returning from the battlefield who face these mental health challenges.

Mr. Speaker, Congress can combat PTSD and TBI through greater awareness, prevention, and research. We can work with the VA and interested stakeholders to take commonsense steps to address staffing shortages, improve family support services, and increase access to services during non-business hours.

Likewise, we need to allow our veterans the freedom to receive mental health care at non-VA facilities. We cannot allow bureaucracy to stand in the way of veterans receiving the critical treatment and services they need. H.R. 1604, the Veterans Mental Health Care Access Act, introduced by Congressman MACARTHUR, would do just that. I am proud to cosponsor this legislation.

Congressman ZELDIN has introduced H.R. 4513, the PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Program, to provide 24/7 peer-to-peer mental health services for veterans, reservists, and National Guardsmen. Our men and women in uniform deserve a strong support system, and this is one way we can ensure they have a trusted sense of community whenever they need it.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, on March 14, 2016, on Roll Call Number 111 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass S. 2426, 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, I am not recorded. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on S. 2426.

On March 14, 2016, on Roll Call Number 112 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree, as Amended, to H. Con. Res. 75, Expressing the sense of Congress that those who commit or support atrocities against Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities and who target them specifically for ethnic or religious reasons, are committing, and are hereby declared to be committing, ''war crimes'', ''crimes against humanity'', and ''genocide'', I am not recorded. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on H. Con. Res. 75.

On March 14, 2016, on Roll Call Number 113 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree, as Amended, to H. Con. Res. 121, Expressing the sense of the Congress condemning the gross violations of international law amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Government of Syria, its allies, and other parties to the conflict in Syria, I am not recorded. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on H. Con. Res. 121.

AN INFORMAL TREATISE ON IMMIGRATION

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight from across the political spectrum that sheds a light on the concerns of our younger constituents. Giving voice to their priorities will hopefully instill a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Conor Devlin attends Thompkins School in Katy, Texas. The essay topic is: An Informal Treatise on Immigration.

Something that has been plaguing my mind, most of western Europe, and this presidential cycle, is immigration. Initially, let me delineate ''refugees'' and economic migrants because many people, especially the authoritarian left, like to use a sweeping generalization and label them all refugees when they are clearly not. Refugees are people who are forced to leave their country due to war, extreme persecution and natural disasters. An excellent example would be the Kurds in northern Iraq, who are currently in battle with the Turks, ISIS, and Russia, and the middle eastern Christians who are being executed and forcibly converted by ISIS and Islamic regimes. These people are the embodiment of refugees; the Kurds are fleeing from war and persecution and the Christians are fleeing from extreme persecution and discrimination. On the other hand we have the economic migrants who are abandoning their countries and arriving at the border of Europe by the thousands. These, predominately male muslims, have no desire to assimilate into Europe despite what many of Europe's leaders may think, and they simply arrive wanting to receive benefits and free money from the European governments who seem all so willing to give them.

The issue stems from the seemingly unwillingness on behalf of many leaders in the EU who simply do not want to be branded as racists for proposing the idea that introducing a population of people who are antagonistic and loathe the European culture could possibly be a bad idea. The word racism thus becomes the metaphorical boogeyman who all politicians seek to avoid as the ruinous label will practically cut short their career. With this in mind it is easily understandable why so many people seem to reject common sense when dealing with a crisis of such a scale as this. If they speak out they will be silenced and utterly destroyed by their supposed friends and their own media. An atmosphere of fear has allowed the migrant crisis to take hold of all of Europe and install a brand new culture of violence and danger—something not yet witnessed in the largely peaceful and safe continent.

Another reason the crisis is still occurring is due to politicians enthrallment with the idea of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism is the idea that all cultures are seemingly equal ergo importing all of these middle eastern men will have no negative effects on society because their culture, where women are gang raped beaten and killed, where gays are killed, and where followers of other religions are persecuted, is seemingly equal to egalitarian free western culture. But it is not, their culture is degenerate and incompatible with western culture.

Censorship and cultural relativism are leading the way to a disastrous future in Europe and in order to see what lies ahead for the US one would need to simply gaze across the pond at our embattled allies.

RECOGNIZING JAN TULK

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO and I rise today to recognize Jan Tulk, who recently retired after 30 years of dedicated service with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) and SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory.

After years of service at the California Coastal Commission, Jan began as LLNL's first environmental attorney in 1985. In 1994, she was named Laboratory Counsel, managing a staff of 25 and offering advice and representation to senior managers on a wide range of complex legal issues.

In 2001, Jan became Associate Director for Administration and Human Resources while also retaining her Laboratory Counsel position for another three years. In this new role she led a staff of about 340 employees fulfilling all of the lab's personnel and administrative functions.

In 2007, Jan was named Senior Advisor to the Director and Special Counsel—a member of the senior management team giving advice on a variety of issues while also providing support in environmental law and litigation.

In 2012, Jan moved to SLAC to lead the Contract Management Group and the Research Partnership and Commercialization Office. In 2013, she became the lab's Chief of Staff, helping director Dr. Chi-Chang Kao work efficiently with SLAC staff and key stakeholders. She also played a major role in SLAC's transformation over the last few years and, being one of the few female leaders in the Department of Energy national laboratory system, Jan championed diversity and inclusion in the lab.

We rise today to recognize Jan Tulk's decades of service to these institutions which push our knowledge and our technology ever forward. She has been an invaluable asset, and we wish her the very best in her well-earned retirement.

IN HONOR OF GEORGE E. NORCROSS III

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my brother, George E. Norcross III, on his 60th birthday.

George is a longtime advocate for South Jersey, philanthropist, and a superb husband, father, son and older brother.

George was born in Cooper University Hospital in Camden, the hospital he now leads as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The oldest son of a labor leader and a home maker who later went on to work in social services, our parents, Carol and George E. Norcross, Jr., George has paved a path fundamentally his own.

After briefly attending Rutgers-Camden, my brother received his real estate and insurance licenses and started his own company. That company known today as Conner Strong & Buckelew, has become one of the nation's premier insurance, risk management and employment benefits brokerage and consulting firms.

But as successful as George has been in business, it has been his commitment to Camden and all of South Jersey that will be his defining legacy. As Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Cooper University Health System and Cooper University Hospital in Camden, New Jersey, where he has been a trustee since 1990, George has lead the transformation of Cooper into a top-tier tertiary academic medical center and launched the Cooper Medical School of Rowan University and opened the MD Anderson Cooper Cancer Center. George and his wife, Sandy, serve as co-chairs of The Cooper Gala, the largest fundraising event in South Jersey each year.

Through the Norcross Family Foundation, George is working to improve education for youth, funding research to help cure diseases, supporting the arts and culture, improving the community's safety, and helping people with disabilities. The Norcross Foundation also partnered with KIPP to open the KIPP Cooper Norcross Academy and George has been a longtime benefactor of the Larc School in New Jersey, which serves children with disabilities.

Accordingly, George has been honored with numerous awards for his contributions to the community including the Annual Champion of Children Award by the Camden Children's Garden and the Tree of Life Award from the Jewish National Fund. In 2013 he was honored by the New Jersey March of Dimes at the organization's Born to Shine Gala, and he recently was awarded the 2015 Haas Regional Champion Medal by the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my wife, Andrea, and with love from my brothers, John and Phil, I wish my oldest brother, George E. Norcross III, a happy birthday, congratulate him for a brilliant first 60 years, and hope he has many more to come.

TWO TIME PURPLE HEART—J.H. HICKS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, it is my honor to pay tribute to an American hero and longtime Texan: J.H. Hicks. J.H. served his country bravely during World War II, receiving two Purple Hearts. He was born in Woodville, Oklahoma on January 10, 1922, but got to Texas as fast as he could—moving to Houston in 1927, at the age of 5, and settling in Spring Branch for the next 88 years. In 1941, J.H. graduated from Reagan High School, however, the months following his graduation would be anything but conventional.

On December 8, 1941, one day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hicks bravely enlisted in the Marines at the age of 18. He was sent to basic training in California in 1942 and subsequently deployed to the Pacific, where he served with the United States Marine Corps aviation unit, MAG–1, over the next 4 years. During his time with MAG–1, Hicks was commissioned to a Marine Torpedo Bomber Squadron or a VMTB Aircraft. Flying with this VMTB Aircraft, Hicks fought in the Solomon Island Campaign, on Munda Island, and in the Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942.

While fighting in the Battle of Guadalcanal, Hicks's plane was intercepted by enemy combatants and attacked. The attack resulted in his plane crashing in the jungle near the Munda airstrip. This crash left him with a broken leg, 8 bullet wounds, and was labeled M.I.A. For two days, Hicks was missing in the jungle, wounded. After he was found, J.H. received a Purple Heart and a battlefield promotion to First Sergeant for his sacrifice.

After four years with MAG–1, a Purple Heart, and a battlefield promotion to First Sergeant, Hicks moved back to Houston where he lived for two years. After two years of job hunting, he decided to reenlist. The Marines were naturally his first choice, given his history, but, when the Marines wouldn't recognize his rank of First Sergeant upon reenlistment, he opted for the Air Force. While with the Air Force in 1945, J.H. fought in one of the most important battles of WWII, the battle of Okinawa. As a result of the battle, Hicks received his second Purple Heart.

It is heroes like J.H. Hicks who remind us freedom isn't free—remind us that day in and day out brave men and women put their lives on the line, and often sacrifice all, to protect our freedoms. Hicks's loyalty, leadership, and patriotism is unparalleled and stands as a shining example to the type of people who call Texas home.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING MR. PAUL BONDERSON

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Paul Bonderson, President of the Ducks Unlimited (DU) conservation group, for his tireless commitment to educational and conservation initiatives in the State of California.

Mr. Bonderson's passion for wildlife and the environment began early in life, accompanying his father and grandfather on early-morning duck hunting trips throughout his childhood. As he put it, ''I have always been an outdoor person. I have a great appreciation for the outdoors and am aware of how much it's been destroyed.'' A lifelong Californian, Mr. Bonderson graduated from Sacramento's Encina Preparatory High School before attending California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. He began working with Ducks Unlimited in 2000, and became the group's 43rd President in June 2015.

From 2001 to 2006, Mr. Bonderson oversaw the acquisition of 2,500 acres of land in Butte County. The land had previously been used for rice production, but Mr. Bonderson has restored the property to its natural habitat. Today, the property—known as Birdhaven Ranch—is home to thousands of ducks, and provides invaluable wetlands educational opportunities for local high school and college students. These conservation and education efforts are especially critical in California, which has lost over 95 percent of its historic wetlands. And as President of DU, he has set forth an admirably ambitious agenda: Mr. Bonderson hopes to raise $2 billion for waterfowl and wildlife conservation as part of the group's ''Rescue Our Wetlands—Banding Together for Waterfowl'' campaign.

Mr. Bonderson has also helped lead efforts to restore North America's Boreal Forest. The forest, over one billion acres of pristine wildlife habitat, is home to 14 million ducks during breeding season, and is threatened by expanding energy, mining and agriculture sectors. In partnership with Pew Charitable Trusts, DU has permanently protected millions of acres of forest, aiming to eventually preserve at least 50 percent of all Boreal territory on the continent.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Bonderson has worked tirelessly to preserve our nation's natural beauty. His commendable efforts will ensure that our country's pristine lands will be enjoyed by future generations, and it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for votes on Tuesday, March 15, 2016. I would like to show that, had I been present, I would have voted ''nay'' on roll call votes 114, 115, and 123. I would have also voted ''yea'' on 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121 and 122.

IN HONOR OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE ARIZONA'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the historic Town of Florence, Arizona. Founded in 1866, Florence is one of the oldest European settlements in the state and is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

Scenic Florence is home to many prominent geographical landmarks that contribute to Arizona's picturesque beauty such as the Gila River, Box Canyon and the Casa Grande Ruins. Florence serves as the final resting place for the Father of Arizona, Charles D. Poston. Moreover, the town admirably provides the state with employees for the nine correctional operations in Florence. It also serves as a connection point for three major transportation corridors in the state. Over time, Florence has developed a fanciful history as a model wild-west establishment. Its notable downtown, Old Silverbell copper Mine, and wonderfully preserved fuel Coke Ovens from the mid-nineteenth century attract visitors from all over.

I would like to take the time to show my appreciation to the Town of Florence for their positive additions to Arizona through timeless beauty, employment, and state pride. Florence's distinctive history over the last 150 years contributes to the unique characteristics shared in the state of Arizona. It is my honor to serve the Town of Florence and wish them a happy 150th anniversary.

RECOGNIZING THE BRAIN INJURY CENTER OF VENTURA COUNTY

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, in conjunction with Brain Injury Awareness Month, I rise to recognize the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County, an organization wholeheartedly dedicated to raising awareness, providing support and resources to survivors and caregivers impacted by brain injury.

Beginning as a grassroots organization in 1995, the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County has grown into an outstanding network that supports an estimated 16,000 people living with traumatic brain injury in Ventura County, as well as thousands of stroke survivors with acquired brain injuries.

Through far-reaching and impactful community outreach efforts, the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County provides education and awareness about the organization's programs, services and brain injury prevention information. In 2015 alone, the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County assisted more than 800 survivors and caregivers to re-establish life after brain injury and develop strategies to build social skills, as well as provide support to families and caregivers.

Today, the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County is collaborating with community healthcare partners, including the Ventura County Medical Center's Trauma Department, to launch the "Care Transitions Demonstration Project." This initiative will allow the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County to support severe brain injury survivors from the point of trauma through post hospital discharge. The Brain Injury Center of Ventura County also works diligently to provide information to patients with mild to moderate brain injuries and concussions in emergency rooms.

Moreover, the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County has helped caregivers develop strategies to meet their personal goals and deal with the challenges in the caregiver-survivor relationship. Some of the organization's services and programs include support groups, courses in social skills and vocational skills, internships, and referral assistance for medical specialists, neuro assessments, counseling, rehabilitation, housing, transportation, employment, financial planning, education and so much more.

For the organization's extensive history and work to improve the quality of life for all individuals impacted by brain injury and their significant efforts and contributions to provide support, resources and awareness for brain injury survivors and caregivers throughout the region, I am honored to recognize the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County.

MAJORITY RULE

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight from across the political spectrum that sheds a light on the concerns of our younger constituents. Giving voice to their priorities will hopefully instill a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Claire Jeffress attends Dawson High School in Pearland, Texas. The essay topic is: Majority Rule.

While growing up and learning about the differences between right and wrong, one is often taught about being fair. When being first taught about the majority rule, I was told one uses the majority rule to be fair to all parties involved. Majority rule is defined as a political principle in which the greater percentage of people who share the same view should exercise greater power. Intuitively this makes sense. If most people want to pick Joe to be President, then Joe should be President. However, we must make sure that Majority Rule does not become Majority Tyranny. Nazi Germany is an example of how devastating an impact a brainwashed majority can have on the very lives of a religious minority. Majority rule should only be applied until the point that it infringes on the liberty of another.

In America, one of the ways we have balanced majority rule with individual rights is that we have enshrined each person's rights in our constitution. In many countries, if the majority does not like what you say, they can stop you from saying your point of view. Here, our right of free speech is protected by the constitution. Similarly, I am entitled to go to church and share my religious beliefs even if others feel differently. The majority is not allowed to vote away my right to speak my opinion or my right to exercise my beliefs. In many other countries, I can be thrown in jail just for sharing my views or going to a church that the majority doesn't believe in. America balances the will of the majority with the rights of the individual by enshrining those rights in our Constitution.

America also protects the individual by having checks and balances in our three branches of government. Venezuela is a good example of where majority rule can go wrong. The people of Venezuela elected Hugo Chavez as their leader. Unfortunately, it was an example of one person, one vote, one time. Mr. Chavez used his power of the majority to steal and redistribute money from individuals to his majority. He also put many of his own people in the courts to ensure that only his voting majority was protected. People who disagreed with his policies were jailed and had their property confiscated. In America, we have an independent Supreme Court and Congress that can override the President if he tries to violate individual rights in our constitution. I cannot be punished just because I disagree with the President.

Many people sometimes think of Democracy as a simple example of majority rule. This thinking is too simplistic. Our founding fathers realized that simple majority rule would just lead to another country torn apart by a tyranny of the majority. They ensured individual liberties were protected through our Constitution and three branches of government. Once the individual was protected, the majority could determine our policies and direction.

TRIBUTE TO AIR FORCE 2ND LIEUTENANT ESTEBAN HOTESSE, TUSKEGEE AIRMAN, DOMINICAN-AMERICAN

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, as Dominican-Americans across our great nation celebrated their heritage and their compatriots commemorated Dominican Independence Day on February 27th, 2016. Today I rise to posthumously honor and pay tribute to Tuskegee Airman Second Lieutenant Esteban (Stephen) Hotesse (Service Number 32218759).

Esteban Hotesse, a Dominican native who immigrated to the country as a child, enlisted during World War II, and served in the lauded Tuskegee Airmen brigade. Though his team was scheduled to go into battle, they never saw combat abroad. As a member of the all-black unit, Hotesse was among a group of 101 Tuskegee Airmen officers arrested for refusing to follow Jim Crow orders from a white commanding officer at a base near Seymour, Indiana, where the KKK had a strong presence.

In March 1945, the last of the Tuskegee groups, the 477th Medium Bombardment Group, was moved from Godman Field, adjacent to Fort Knox, to Freeman Field because of the latter's better flight facilities. Tensions

between the 477th and the white command structure on the base were tense as soon as the 477th arrived, and shortly thereafter, an incident occurred unparalleled in Air Corps history.

Upon their arrival at Freeman, the commanding officer of the base, Colonel Robert R. Selway, moved quickly to set up and enforce a segregated system. The group was housed in a dilapidated building. Col. Selway also created a novel system to deny the Airmen entry into the officers' club. He classified the Black airmen as ''trainees,'' even though they had all finished flight school, and therefore were all commissioned officers. As trainees, they were forced to use a rundown, former noncommissioned officers club nicknamed ''Uncle Tom's Cabin.'' This all occurred despite an order issued in 1940 issued by President Roosevelt himself that no officer should be denied access to any officer's club. On April 5, 1945 a group of the Airmen peacefully entered the officers' club in protest. Sixty-one were arrested within 24 hours. This act of disobedience later became known as the Freeman Field Mutiny. Hotesse perished later that year in an accidental plane crash. His obituary in a Dominican newspaper lists his cause of death as a B–25 crash in the Ohio River in Indiana.

Esteban (Stephen) Hotesse was born on February 2, 1919 in Moca, Dominican Republic, and he came to the U.S. at the age of 4 with his mother, Clara Pacheco, who at the time was 25 years old. Hotesse was also accompanied by his sister Irma Hotesse, age 2. They came through the famous port of Ellis Island and, like many Dominicans at the time, went to live in my Congressional District within Upper Manhattan. At the time of his enlistment, he was living with his wife, Iristella Lind, who was Puerto Rican. They applied for U.S. citizenship in April 1943 after he'd served almost a year. The couple had two daughters before he enlisted. Today, one of his daughters, Mary Lou Hotesse, resides in New York City and two granddaughters, one named Iris Rivera, live in the South.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our distinguished colleagues join me in paying tribute to one of our nation's heroes. In life, he immigrated to our shores to join ranks with our military force in the advancement of peace, justice, and freedom here and abroad.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, March 15, 2016, I was unable to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on roll call no. 118, NAY.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on March 15, I missed a series of Roll Call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted ''YEA'' on Numbers 114, 115, 116, 117, and 123 and voted ''NAY'' on Numbers 118, 119, 120, 121, and 122.

SYRIAN IMMIGRATION

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight from across the political spectrum that sheds a light on the concerns of our younger constituents. Giving voice to their priorities will hopefully instill a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Cameron Lavine attends George Ranch High School in Richmond, Texas. The essay topic is: Select an important event that has occurred in the past year and explain how that event has changed/shaped our country.

Throughout history, the United States has been a beacon of hope for immigrants around the world. Beginning in the early 1700's, when the first of the Scots-Irish immigrants came to America, we have generally been extremely welcoming to foreigners, even if we did not necessarily want them. The Scots-Irish, more specifically the Paxton Boys, caused many problems for Americans and Native Americans, yet, despite the danger they presented to society, the Scots-Irish were still allowed to enter the United States. Then, in the mid-1800's, there was a wave of Irish immigrants because of the famine and there was a wave of Chinese immigrants into America. Although Chinese immigration was later on restricted, people were still allowed to enter this country. There are many other groups of people who have been able to seek refuge in the United States as well, and the latest asylum seekers are the Syrians who have been displaced by the poverty and violence that resulted from a civil war. However, instead of opening our arms and providing assistance to those in need as we have done in the past, many people want to close off the United States.

The number of Syrian refugees has increased severely over the past year, creating a large burden on European and Middle Eastern nations such as Greece, Germany, and Turkey. Many of these countries are calling upon the United States to take action since they are the current hegemonic power. However, a majority of American politicians believe that we should ignore that call. This humanitarian crisis has turned into an ethical dilemma: Should the United States accept the Syrian refugees who are trying to escape poverty and violence despite the potential dangers, or should we close our doors in order to protect national security? This event has really sent the traditional belief that the United States is safe haven for anyone trying to escape persecution, violence, and poverty into a tailspin. For the first time, the U.S. is considering turning its back on those in need, a direct contrast to past events where America was a willing safe-haven for those seeking asylum.

HONORING JOHN AND DENISE KURTZ OF PENNSYLVANIA

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to honor John and Denise Kurtz on their retirement after more than 62 years of combined Federal service to the United States of America.

With 32 years of service, John began his Federal Government career as a GS–1 Clerk Typist with the United States Army Logistics Evaluation Agency. He rose through the ranks primarily working in financial operations and concluding his career as Director, DLA Finance Distribution. Through his financial acumen, I understand he was instrumental to the success and execution of the Defense Management Review Decision 902, as well as, numerous Base Realignment and Closure and A–76 actions. Always committed to continuous process improvement and stewardship excellence, John shared his innovative ideas and proactively developed financial solutions that enabled DLA Distribution to provide premiere distribution support to the Department of Defense and other government agencies.

With 30 years of service, Denise began her Federal Government career as a Payroll Clerk, GS–3, with the Defense Depot Mechanicsburg and rose through various diverse assignments, concluding her career as Acting Director, Distribution Policy and Processing at Defense Logistics Agency Distribution. Denise was instrumental in spearheading major initiatives integral to the organization's Inventory Integrity and Stock Readiness Programs, while regularly seeking opportunities to improve processes and procedures ensuring that the organization provided effective, efficient and best value logistics solutions to our Nation's military.

From the beginning of their careers, the Kurtz's exhibited professionalism and devotion to duty—the standard by which all civil servants are to be measured.

On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, it's with great pride that I congratulate John and Denise Kurtz on their retirement after more than 62 years of combined service to the United States of America.

HONORING MR. JOHN BILLINGSLEY

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the honoring of John Billingsley, a founder and Chief Executive Officer of Tri Global Energy, in the Dallas Business Journal's ''2015 Who's Who in Energy.'' Mr. Billingsley has worked in a variety of industries including commercial real estate, banking, and manufacturing. However with Tri Global Energy, headquartered in Dallas, Texas, his focus is on wind power in Texas.

Mr. Billingsley was born south of Lubbock, Texas on a cotton farm and attended college at Texas Tech University where he graduated

with a Bachelor of Business Administration with a major in Accounting. Among other admirable ventures, he co-founded a CPA firm, Johnson Kubica & Co. that later merged into Arthur Young, and served as Chairman of the Board and President of the Western State Bank of Midland.

Billingsley founded Tri Global Energy in January of 2009 when a few wind developers approached him asking to lease his land. Tri Global Energy now leases land in Texas to a renewable energy developers and has become a solar energy developer and provider as well. The company's ''Wind Force Plan'' allows for ownership and partnership for landowners, stakeholders, and local communities who are involved in their wind projects—creating a strong community within the company.

Tri Global Energy is now the top developer of wind energy projects in Texas, and reflects the growing diversity of energy production in the state of Texas. Billingsley has wind generation projects under development in Texas and New Mexico that could potentially produce some 6,600 megawatts of power when they become fully operational. He has proven himself to be a valuable member of the North Texas business community and leading energy entrepreneur in the state of Texas, and I am honored to recognize him as a constituent of my district.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize the career of John Billingsley. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating this milestone in his remarkable life.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF VIVIEN HAIG

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievements and contributions of my good friend Vivien Haig as she steps down from her position as director-general of the Transatlantic Policy Network.

Over the years, Vivien has encouraged international cooperation through her work with the Transatlantic Policy Network (TPN), the Transatlantic Business Dialogue, the Atlantic Council, the Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce, and the Hong Kong—Europe Business Cooperation Committee. Vivien has served as director-general of TPN since its founding in 1992. A natural communicator with experience in non-profit entrepreneurship, Vivien understood TPN's potential to strengthen the transatlantic partnership and worked diligently to turn TPN into a highly effective network with a reputation for getting things done. She focuses on bringing together business leaders, think tank contributors, and elected officials for constructive dialogue on policy issues important to both sides of the Atlantic.

Another example of Vivien's leadership is the annual success of TPN's Transatlantic Week in Washington, DC. Each year, Transatlantic Week has been an unprecedented opportunity to engage in candid conversations with policy leaders at the highest level. Vivien played an invaluable role in convening a diverse group of people dedicated to the success of our transatlantic partnership. Participants appreciate the chance to dive into timely discussions with Members of Congress, Members of European Parliament, industry leaders, and prominent officials such as U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman, former World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick, EU Ambassador to the U.S. David O'Sullivan, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, and many more.

Leaders around the world have commended Vivien for her capacity to build relationships based on trust and mutual understanding. Regardless if Vivien holds an official position or provides informal advice, anyone who has worked with Vivien knows they can rely on her quick wit, attention to detail, and practical approach to develop innovative ideas. It is no surprise the European American Business Council honored Vivien by naming her as the 2008 private sector recipient of the Atlantic Leadership Award. Her innate ability to bring people together will continue to reap benefits for the transatlantic relationship in years to come.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and respect that I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Vivien Haig and her many contributions to the U.S.-European partnership. Most importantly, I want to personally thank Vivien for her friendship over the years. We would not be where we are today without your vision and leadership.

HONORING MR. KENNETH H. HOFMANN

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Kenneth Hofmann, owner of the Rancho Esquon Wildlife Area and wetlands steward par excellence, for his commitment to community development and wildlife preservation.

Mr. Hofmann, a lifelong Californian, has spent most of the past three decades working to promote philanthropy, educational and artistic initiatives, and wildlife conservation. In 1990, Mr. Hofmann purchased Rancho Esquon, a sprawling agricultural property in Butte County, and began working to restore its natural habitat. Today, the ranch boasts over 900 acres of wetlands, is home to more than 20,000 trees and 173 species of birds, and serves as a valuable educational resource. Over 4,000 students have taken class field trips to Rancho Esquon, many of whom have returned to visit the site's egg salvage facility.

Today, to further expose and educate regarding the importance of our wetlands, Mr. Hofmann is in the process of building the Pacific Flyway Center, a world-class museum and zoo facility in Suisun Marsh. The Center is dedicated to inspiring conservation of the Pacific Flyway, a critical migratory route stretching from Alaska to Patagonia. Every year, at least one billion birds migrate along the Flyway, and its importance to waterfowl populations cannot be overstated. Upon completion, the Center will offer educational opportunities for local students and citizens.

Mr. Hofmann's charitable organization, The Hofmann Family Foundation (HFF), has worked for over 20 years to help young people in need. In 1995, a $1 million donation from the HFF created the Concord Community Youth Center, which today provides educational and athletic opportunities for 1,900 underprivileged young people. And in 2014, Mr. Hofmann donated funds to create the De La Salle Academy, a division of De La Salle High School dedicated to providing high-quality education for boys whose financial circumstances would otherwise prevent private schooling. By the end of 2016, the Academy will have 80 students enrolled in the fifth and sixth grades.

Mr. Speaker, Kenneth Hofmann has dedicated his time and resources for nearly 40 years to enriching the lives of California's young people and protecting its environment. Mr. Hofmann's efforts have benefitted our community enormously, and it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

ELUSIVE CRIME WAVE DATA SHOWS FRIGHTENING TOLL OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT CRIMINALS

HON. STEVE KING

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following:

[From FoxNews.com, Sept. 16, 2015]

ELUSIVE CRIME WAVE DATA SHOWS FRIGHTENING TOLL OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT CRIMINALS

(By Malia Zimmerman)

The federal government can tell you how many ''Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders'' stole a car, the precise number of ''American Indian or Alaska Natives'' who were arrested for vagrancy or how many whites were busted for counterfeiting in any given year. But the government agencies that crunch crime numbers are utterly unable—or unwilling—to pinpoint for the public how many illegal immigrants are arrested within U.S. borders each year.

In the absence of comprehensive data, FoxNews.com examined a patchwork of local, state and federal statistics that revealed a wildly disproportionate number of murderers, rapists and drug dealers are crossing into the U.S. amid the wave of hard-working families seeking a better life. The explosive figures show illegal immigrants are three times as likely to be convicted of murder as members of the general population and account for far more crimes than their 3.5-percent share of the U.S. population would suggest. Critics say it is no accident that local, state and federal governments go to great lengths to keep the data under wraps.

''There are a lot of reasons states don't make this information readily available, and there is no clearinghouse of data at high levels,'' said former Department of Justice attorney J. Christian Adams, who has conducted exhaustive research on the subject. ''These numbers would expose how serious the problem is and make the government look bad.''

Adams called illegal immigrant crime a ''wave of staggering proportions.'' He and other experts noted that the issue has been dragged into the spotlight by a spate of cases in which illegal immigrants with criminal records killed people after being released from custody because of incoherent procedures and a lack of cooperation between local and federal law enforcement officials.

The murders, including the July 1 killing of Kathryn Steinle, allegedly by an illegal immigrant in San Francisco, have left grieving loved ones angry and confused, local and federal officials pointing fingers at one another and the voting public demanding secure borders and swift deportation of non-citizen criminals.

''Every one (of the recent cases) was preventable through better border security and enforcing immigration laws,'' said Jessica Vaughan, director of policy studies at the Center for Immigration Studies. ''They should have been sent back to their home country instead of being allowed to stay here and have the opportunity to kill Americans.''

A spokesperson for U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement told FoxNews.com that comprehensive statistics on illegal immigrant crime are not available from the federal government, and suggested contacting county, state and federal jail and prison systems individually to compose a tally, a process that would encompass thousands of local departments.

FoxNews.com did review reports from immigration reform groups and various government agencies, including the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Sentencing Commission, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Government Accountability Office, the Bureau of Justice Statistics and several state and county correctional departments. Statistics show the estimated 11.7 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. account for 13.6 percent of all offenders sentenced for crimes committed in the U.S. Twelve percent of murder sentences, 20 percent of kidnapping sentences and 16 percent of drug trafficking sentences are meted out to illegal immigrants.

There are approximately 2.1 million legal or illegal immigrants with criminal convictions living free or behind bars in the U.S., according to ICE's Secure Communities office. Each year, about 900,000 legal and illegal immigrants are arrested, and 700,000 are released from jail, prison, or probation. ICE estimates that there are more than 1.2 million criminal aliens at large in the U.S.

In the most recent figures available, a Government Accountability Office report titled, ''Criminal Alien Statistics,'' found there were 55,000 illegal immigrants in federal prison and 296,000 in state and local lockups in 2011. Experts agree those figures have almost certainly risen, although executive orders from the Obama administration may have changed the status of thousands who previously would have been counted as illegal immigrants.

Hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrant criminals are being deported. In 2014, ICE removed 315,943 criminal illegal immigrants nationwide, 85 percent of whom had previously been convicted of a criminal offense. But that same year, ICE released onto U.S. streets another 30,558 criminal illegal immigrants with a combined 79,059 criminal convictions including 86 homicides, 186 kidnappings, and thousands of sexual assaults, domestic violence assaults and DUIs, Vaughan said. As of August, ICE had already released at least 10,246 criminal aliens.

David Inserra, a policy analyst for Homeland Security and Cybersecurity at The Heritage Foundation, said letting illegal immigrants convicted of crimes go free while they await deportation hearings is putting the public at risk.

''While it is not certain how many of these individuals were here illegally, most of these individuals were in deportation proceedings and should have been detained or at least more closely supervised and monitored until their deportation order was finalized and executed,'' Inserra said.

Adams opened a rare window into the dearth of public data when he obtained an internal report compiled by the Texas Department of Public Safety and revealed its contents on his Pajamas Media blog. The report showed that between 2008 and 2014, noncitizens in Texas—a group that includes illegal and legal immigrants—committed 611,234 crimes, including nearly 3,000 homicides. Adams told FoxNews.com that other states have also closely tracked illegal immigrant crime, especially in the wake of 9/11, but said the statistical sorting ''is done behind closed doors.'' States closely guard the statistics out of either fear of reprisals from the federal government or out of their leaders' own insistence on downplaying the burden of illegal immigrant crime, he said.

''There are a lot of reasons states don't make this information readily available and there is no clearinghouse of data at high levels,'' Adams said. ''These numbers would expose how serious the problem is and make the government look bad.''

A smattering of statistics can be teased out of data made public in other states heavily impacted by illegal immigration, although a full picture or apples-to-apples comparison remains elusive.

In Florida, there were 5,061 illegal immigrant inmates in state prison facilities as of June 30, but neither the state Department of Corrections nor the Florida Department of Law Enforcement track the number in county prisons, spokesmen for those agencies told FoxNews.com.

In Illinois, where state prisons house 46,993 inmates, some 3,755 are illegal immigrants, according to Illinois Department of Corrections figures. Once again, state officials do not compile figures for county jails, although a Cook County official estimated that nearly 6 percent were illegal immigrants.

In Arizona, neither state public safety officials nor the governor's office could produce figures showing the number of criminal illegal immigrants held in county jails, but state prison figures released by the Arizona Department of Corrections show out of 42,758 prisoners held in state facilities in July, about 10.8 percent were illegal immigrants.

In California, there were 128,543 inmates in custody as of Aug. 12, but the state, which has been criticized for its leniency toward illegal immigrants, no longer keeps track of the citizenship status of inmates. As of July 31, 2013, the last time figures were documented, there were as many as 18,000 ''foreign-born'' citizens in California state prisons of 133,000 incarcerated. The Board of State and Community Corrections provided figures to Fox News from 2014, showing there were 142,000 inmates in 120 county prisons, but while everything from mental health cases to dental and medical appointments are closely tracked, the number of illegal aliens—or even non citizens—is not.

''Frankly, this is something every state should track, but they don't. Not even ICE publishes this much information on offenders and immigration status,'' Vaughan said.

Several pro-immigration groups contacted by FoxNews.com declined to comment on the outsize role illegal immigrants play in the U.S. criminal justice system. One group that did insisted that even illegal immigrants provide a net benefit to the U.S.

''Immigrants, regardless of their legal status, make valuable contributions to our economy as workers, business owners, taxpayers and consumers,'' said Erin Oshiro, of Asian Americans Advancing Justice. ''We need an immigration system that keeps families together, protects workers, and prioritizes due process and human rights.''

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight from across the political spectrum that sheds a light on the concerns of our younger constituents. Giving voice to their priorities will hopefully instill a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Connor Cerda attends Seven Lakes High School in Katy, Texas. The essay topic is: Select an important event that has occurred in the past year and explain how that event has changed/shaped our country.

On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that state level bans on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional. It also ruled that the denial of same-sex marriage licenses and the refusal to preform same-sex marriages was no longer allowed. This has been a very controversial topic for decades and through this ruling, it truly showed where America as a country is heading.

In the eyes of Christians and pastors around the U.S., this ruling spat in God's face and in the founding fathers' faces of this great nation. They founded this nation on the teachings of the Bible, but every generation since has fallen away. The Bible specifically describes marriage as the unity of man and woman and that is what it was intended to be for all of eternity. Christians, by no means, hate homosexuals or those who practice same-sex marriage; but rather, Christians hate the practice of it. It breaks the hearts of Christ followers to see people fall into this sin and false illusion that this practice is okay. As for pastors, this ruling is even more troubling to them. They are now under pressure from the public to perform these marriage ceremonies and recognize these same-sex couples even though it goes against all that they stand for and believe in. However, those who refuse often face harsh public criticism. On a religious standpoint, this ruling has affected the relationship between church and state. Although separate, it is hard to trust a government to protect one's religious rights if they make decisions that directly oppose what this country was so proudly founded upon and what people strongly believe in.

This nation was founded on strong and bold principles that not many countries share. The fact that the U.S. is changing these principles is disturbing. And for what benefit? There is no clear reason or purpose to pass this ruling besides it was what a group of people wanted and the U.S. government gave in. There is no positive outcome or benefit that has been reaped from this ruling. It is scary to think about what other principles this nation is willing to sacrifice. If anything, it created a gap between the citizens of this nation and the country as a whole. A certain level of trust was lost that will be extremely hard to gain back. It also creates a messed up view from the perspectives of other countries. They look at the U.S. and see a screwed up society that believes

marrying the same sex is okay and a given right to people. This country is socially going down hill through the decisions made by the government and the people and this ruling was just another step towards this fall.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EMERGENCY FINANCIAL MANAGER REFORM ACT OF 2016

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, the Emergency Financial Manager Reform Act of 2016 is intended to ensure that state-appointed emergency financial managers for municipalities in fiscal distress do not violate Constitutional protections, ensure public health and safety, and are accountable stewards of taxpayer funds. The bill responds to problems presented when unaccountable emergency financial managers usurp local elected officials and unilaterally make decisions that jeopardize public health and safety.

Across our Nation, there are many cities in financial distress still struggling to recover from the Great Recession and other factors undermining their economic recovery. While most states work cooperatively with their cities to foster economic stability and growth, others such as my home state of Michigan, use draconian, autocratic laws that usurp local elected officials and replace them with unaccountable political appointees—typically known as emergency financial managers—who, through their vast powers, can jeopardize the health and safety of those who live and work in these struggling cities.

In Michigan, for example, the root cause of the hazardous condition of Flint's lead-contaminated drinking water and the Detroit Public School System's buildings is the unaccountable emergency financial managers appointed by our Governor, Rick Snyder. This law and its implementation threaten not only our citizens' health and safety, but our fundamental Constitutional values and principles.

In addition, extreme emergency financial manager laws frequently facilitate conflicts of interest and mismanagement and can be used to contravene important federal and state constitutional protections for collective bargaining agreements. They can authorize emergency financial managers to unilaterally reject collective bargaining agreements and other contractual obligations and thereby negate years of hard earned worker pension benefits. These are not just problems in Michigan, as it has been suggested that Atlantic City, which is also in financial distress, be taken over by an unaccountable emergency financial manager with broad powers similar to those available in Michigan.

The Emergency Financial Manager Reform Act responds to these serious concerns by authorizing the Attorney General to reallocate five percent of the law enforcement funds that would otherwise be allocated to a state under the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne–JAG), which provides funding to states for law enforcement purposes, if it is determined that the state appointed emergency financial manager violates any one of seven common sense safeguards:

Protection Against Discriminatory Impact on Voting—This provision requires the state that has appointed an emergency financial manager to submit a certification to the Attorney General (and every 18 months after such appointment if the tenure of the emergency financial manager continues beyond such period) that the appointment: (A) has neither the purpose nor the effect of denying, abridging, or diluting the right to vote on account of race or color; and (B) the community for which the emergency financial manager is sought to be appointed has had an opportunity to comment, on the impact of such appointment may have on voting rights.

Protection Against States Ignoring Adverse Impacts on Voting Rights—This provision requires the Attorney General to receive copies of all public comments submitted in response to the notice required above and to interpose an objection to the certification.

Protection Against Harm to Public Health and Safety—This provision requires the emergency financial manager before making decisions affecting public health or safety, including the disbursement of any emergency funds provided by any federal or state entity for the purpose of addressing lead or other contamination of drinking water in a public water system, to receive prior approval from the governor and local elected officials.

Protection Against Conflicts of Interest, Mismanagement, and Abuse of Discretion—This provision requires the emergency financial manager to have adequate oversight to ensure against conflicts of interest, mismanagement, and abuse of discretion.

Protection Against Unilateral Rejection of Other Contracts—This provision provides that the emergency financial manager may not reject, modify, or terminate an existing contract without mutual consent or unless such rejection, modification, or termination is approved by a federal bankruptcy court.

Protection Against Rejection of Collective Bargaining Agreements—This provision provides that the emergency financial manager may not reject, modify, or terminate a collective bargaining agreement without mutual consent of the parties.

Protection Against the Failure to Provide Public Notice and Opportunity to Comment—This provision ensures that the public—before an emergency financial manager is appointed—is provided notice and the opportunity to comment on whether the appointee has any conflicts of interest, whether he or she has the requisite experience and financial acumen, and whether the appointee is empowered to propose sources of financial assistance, such as loans, grants and revenue sharing. The public must also be given the name of a state official designated to received complaints from the public about the appointee's conflicts of interest, mismanagement, or dereliction of duty.

The objective of the legislation is not to deny Byrne–JAG grant funds, but rather to incentivize the states to protect their citizens against these risks and abuses when emergency financial managers are appointed. However, if in the event the finds are withheld, they are directly reallocated to the local government for which an emergency financial manager is appointed.

We can and must stand together to make sure that the unaccountable emergency financial managers responsible for these man-made disasters—and the legal system that empowered them—are not permitted to inflict further harm on our citizens.

TRIBUTE TO PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY POLICE OFFICER JACAI COLSON

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my condolences and prayers to the family of Prince George's Police Officer Jacai Colson, who died in the line of duty last Sunday just before his 29th birthday. The senseless, callous, and unprovoked death of Officer Colson reminds us that our men in blue risk their lives every day for our safety. In his four years of service on the force, Officer Colson was dedicated to his community. His friends and family describe him as a natural leader with an infectious smile who followed in his grandfather's footsteps to become a police officer. Officer Colson served as an undercover narcotics officer and was placed frequently in high risk situations—risks that he took because he knew he was making a difference. Our community lost a true hero who every day put his life at risk for the rest of us. His loss is a tragedy for his family, his fellow officers, and our State. I offer my deep condolences to all who knew Officer Colson in this time of grief.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for votes taken on the House floor on March 3, 2016, and March 14, 2016, as I was unavoidably detained.

Had I been present, I would have voted 'NO' on Roll Call Vote Number 106, 'NO' on Roll Call Vote Number 107, 'AYE' on Roll Call Vote Number 108, 'YES' on Roll Call Vote Number 109, 'NO' on Roll Call Vote Number 110, 'AYE' on Roll Call Vote Number 111, 'AYE' on Roll Call Vote Number 112, and 'AYE' on Roll Call Vote Number 113.

TRIBUTE TO EAGLE SCOUT ANDREW JONES

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Andrew Jones of Boy Scout Troop 729 in Treynor, Iowa for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Eagle Scout rank is the highest advancement rank in scouting. Only about five percent of Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award. The award is a performance-based achievement with high standards that have been well-maintained for more than a century.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout is obligated to pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges, as well as completing an Eagle Project to benefit the community. For his project, Andrew planned and implemented the installation of a new fence and other grounds maintenance at the Fairview Pioneer Memorial Chapel. He is also an active member of his community and participates in local food drives, flag retirement ceremonies, and highway litter removal projects. The work ethic Andrew has shown in his Eagle Project and every other project leading up to his Eagle Scout rank speaks volumes of his commitment to serving a cause greater than himself and assisting his community.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication and perseverance. I am honored to represent Andrew and his family in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating him on reaching the rank of Eagle Scout and in wishing him nothing but continued success in his future education and career.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I missed ten votes on March 15. If I were present, I would have voted on the following:

Rollcall No. 114: On Ordering the Previous Question, ''yea.''

Rollcall No. 115: On Passage of H. Res. 640, ''yea.''

Rollcall No. 116: On Passage of H.R. 2081, ''yea.''

Rollcall No. 117: On Passage of H.R. 3447, ''yea.''

Rollcall No. 118: On Passage of Pallone Amendment No. 1 to H.R. 3797, ''nay.''

Rollcall No. 119: On Passage of Pallone Amendment No. 2 to H.R. 3797, ''nay.''

Rollcall No. 120: On Passage of Bera Amendment to H.R. 3797, ''nay.''

Rollcall No. 121: On Passage of Veasey Amendment to H.R. 3797, ''nay.''

Rollcall No. 122: On the Motion to Recommit with Instructions, ''nay.''

Rollcall No. 123: On Passage of H.R. 3797, ''yea.''

HONORING JIM GREER

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor Jim Greer, Veteran Service Officer of Stanislaus County Veterans Services Office, on his retirement and to thank him for his dedicated service to our Nations heroes.

After serving 30 years, Jim retired as a Command Master Chief Petty Officer in the Navy. Following his service, he applied for a Veterans Services Representative position in Stanislaus County, and was hired in April of 1993. At first, the Veterans Services Office was serving about 50 to 60 veterans a month. Within six months of Jim's service, the office was seeing nearly 500 veterans a month.

As a Veterans Service Officer, Jim gladly accepted tremendous responsibilities including: visiting the local Veterans Service Organizations, training work study students to become Veterans Representatives, and personally assisting as many veterans as he could.

Jim has played a vital role in acquiring a Veterans Center and a VA Community Base Outpatient Clinic in Modesto, California, improving assistance to veterans in the area. As a member of the California Association of County Veterans Services Officers, Jim has been asked to speak at various conferences and events to raise awareness on administrative issues in order to benefit local veterans.

An active member of my Veterans Advisory Committee, Jim plays an essential role to reach out to the Veterans population with the most current information regarding bills, issues, and needs.

Jim has changed the lives of thousands of veterans through his dedication and commitment over the last 23 years. He lives by the motto, ''if Veterans don't help each other, no one else will'' and he has truly lived up to that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and recognizing my friend for his unwavering leadership, many accomplishments, and contributions on behalf of the veteran community and his service to the United States of America.

CONGRATULATING I.C. NORCOM HIGH SCHOOL'S BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. ROBERT C. ''BOBBY'' SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a talented group of young athletes who have distinguished themselves as giants on the basketball court, making their school, their community, and the city of Portsmouth, Virginia very proud. The I.C. Norcom High School boys basketball team had another remarkable season and I am honored to recognize their accomplishments.

On March 12, 2016, the I.C. Norcom Greyhounds beat the Hopewell Blue Devils 67 to 65, to win the Group 3A state basketball championship. It was truly a remarkable game. In overtime, I.C. Norcom tied the game and with only seconds left on the clock, the Greyhounds' Travis Fields stole the ball from the Blue Devils, successfully hit a jump shot, clinching another championship for I.C. Norcom.

The Greyhounds have had a consistent run of excellence in recent years. This year's victory is I.C. Norcom's third consecutive state title and their fifth state title in the last seven seasons. It goes without saying, but I.C. Norcom has certainly become a force to be reckoned with in Virginia high school sports.

I.C. Norcom High School was founded in 1913 as the High Street School, the first public high school for black students in Portsmouth. It was renamed in 1953 in honor of its first supervising principal, Israel Charles Norcom, a pioneering educator, civic leader and businessman. Now, more than 100 years and three locations later, I.C. Norcom High School is still an innovating and inspiring place for Portsmouth students.

In addition to excelling on the basketball court, the Greyhounds are also doing great things in the classroom. I.C. Norcom houses a Center of Excellence in Math and Science, which provides students with additional classes in science, math, and technology. Seniors completing the Center's curriculum this year will receive Center of Excellence Diplomas which require five science course credits, one more than necessary under the advanced diploma. In addition, I.C. Norcom students have been participating in the First College program—attending Tidewater Community College this semester and taking up to 14 college credits before they graduate. I.C. Norcom is doing a great job cultivating excellence both on and off the athletic field.

I would like to extend my enthusiastic congratulations to each of the Greyhounds' players, their families, Principal Shameka Pollard, Coach Leon Goolsby and his entire coaching staff, on the occasion of another amazing state championship victory. On behalf of the citizens of Virginia's Third Congressional District, I commend the Greyhounds for this historic win and wish the program many more years of continued success.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

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

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 2016 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

APRIL 5

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the effects of consumer finance regulations.

SD–538

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine recent Iranian actions and implementation of the nuclear deal.

SD–419

APRIL 6

2 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To hold hearings to examine Navy shipbuilding programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

APRIL 7

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Business meeting to consider the nominations of Jay Neal Lerner, of Illinois, to be Inspector General, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and Amias Moore Gerety, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Semi-Annual Report to Congress.
SD–538

APRIL 13

2 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To hold hearings to examine Marine Corps ground modernization in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–232A

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
To hold hearings to examine ballistic missile defense policies and programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

APRIL 14

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Subcommittee on Economic Policy
To hold joint hearings to examine current trends and changes in the fixed-income markets.
SD–538

APRIL 20

2 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To hold hearings to examine Navy and Marine Corps aviation programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–232A

APRIL 27

2:15 p.m.
Committee on Indian Affairs
To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Government Accountability Office report on ''Telecommunications: Additional Coordination and Performance Measurement Needed for High-Speed Internet Access Programs on Tribal Lands.''
SD–628

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

See Final Résumé of Congressional Activity (including the History of Bills) for the First Session of the 114th Congress.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1515–1551

Measures Introduced: Twelve bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2688–2699, and S. Res. 401–402. **Pages S1544–45**

Measures Reported:

S. 818, to amend the Grand Ronde Reservation Act to make technical corrections, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 114–230)

S. Res. 368, supporting efforts by the Government of Colombia to pursue peace and the end of the country's enduring internal armed conflict and recognizing United States support for Colombia at the 15th anniversary of Plan Colombia.

S. Res. 375, raising awareness of modern slavery.

S. Res. 378, expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the courageous work and life of Russian opposition leader Boris Yefimovich Nemtsov and renewing the call for a full and transparent investigation into the tragic murder of Boris Yefimovich Nemtsov in Moscow on February 27, 2015.

S. Res. 383, recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation.

S. Res. 388, supporting the goals of International Women's Day, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and with an amended preamble.

S. Res. 392, expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the prosecution and conviction of former President Mohamed Nasheed without due process and urging the Government of the Maldives to take all necessary steps to redress this injustice, to release all political prisoners, and to ensure due process and freedom from political prosecution for all the people of the Maldives. **Page S1544**

Measures Passed:

Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act: Senate passed H.R. 1831, to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S1548**

McConnell (for Burr/Murray) Amendment No. 3456, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S1548**

Captain John E. Moran and Captain William Wylie Galt Armed Forces Reserve Center: Committee on Armed Services was discharged from further consideration of S. 719, to rename the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Great Falls, Montana, the Captain John E. Moran and Captain William Wylie Galt Armed Forces Reserve Center, and the bill was then passed. **Pages S1548–49**

National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 401, designating March 22, 2016, as ''National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day''. **Page S1549**

United States of America v. Chaka Fattah, Sr., et al.: Senate agreed to S. Res. 402, to authorize testimony, documentary production, and representation in *United States of America v. Chaka Fattah, Sr., et al.* **Page S1549**

House Messages:

National Sea Grant College Program Amendments: Senate continued consideration of the House message to accompany S. 764, to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, taking action on the following motions proposed thereto: **Pages S1516–38**

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the House amendment to the bill with McConnell (for Roberts) Amendment No. 3450 (to the House amendment to the bill), in the nature of a substitute. **Page S1516**

McConnell motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. **Page S1516**

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

By 48 yeas to 49 nays (Vote No. 37), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on McConnell motion to concur in the House amendment to the bill with

McConnell (for Roberts) Amendment No. 3450 (to the House amendment to the bill) (listed above). Page S1524

Senator McConnell entered a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on McConnell motion to concur in the House amendment to the bill with McConnell (for Roberts) Amendment No. 3450 (to the House amendment to the bill). Page S1524

Directing Senate Legal Counsel—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 12:45 p.m., on Thursday, March 17, 2016, Senate begin consideration of S. Res. 377, directing the Senate Legal Counsel to bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations; that there be one hour of debate, equally divided in the usual form; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on adoption of the resolution, with no intervening action or debate. Page S1548

Defend Trade Secrets Act—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 5 p.m., Monday, April 4, 2016, Senate begin consideration of S. 1890, to amend chapter 90 of title 18, United States Code, to provide Federal jurisdiction for the theft of trade secrets; that there be 30 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form; and that following the use or yielding back of time, the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, and Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with no intervening action or debate. Page S1548

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the issuance of an Executive Order to take additional steps with respect to the national emergency originally declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008 with respect to North Korea; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (PM–45) Pages S1540–41

Nomination Received: Senate received the following nomination:

Merrick B. Garland, of Maryland, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Page S1551

Messages from the House: Page S1541

Measures Referred: Page S1541

Measures Placed on the Calendar: Page S1541

Executive Communications: Pages S1541–43

Petitions and Memorials: Pages S1543–44

Executive Reports of Committees: Page S1544

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S1545–46

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Page S1546

Additional Statements: Pages S1539–40

Amendments Submitted: Pages S1546–48

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S1548

Privileges of the Floor: Page S1548

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—37) Page S1524

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10:15 a.m. and adjourned at 5:44 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 17, 2016. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1549.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the National Guard and Reserve, after receiving testimony from General Frank J. Grass, Chief of the National Guard, Major General Brian Neal, Acting Director of the Air National Guard, Lieutenant General Timothy J. Kadavy, Director of the Army National Guard, Lieutenant General Jeffrey W. Talley, Chief of the Army Reserve, Vice Admiral Robin R. Braun, Chief of the Navy Reserve, Lieutenant General James Jackson, Chief of the Air Force Reserve, and Lieutenant General Rex C. McMillian, Commander of the Marine Forces Reserve, all of the Department of Defense.

APPROPRIATIONS: NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the National Nuclear Security Administration, after receiving testimony from Lieutenant General Frank G. Klotz, USAF (Ret.), Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, and Administrator, Brigadier General Stephen L. Davis, USAF, Principal Assistant Deputy Administrator for Military Applications, Anne Harrington, Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, and Admiral James F. Caldwell Jr., USN, Deputy Administrator for Naval Reactors, all of the National Nuclear Security Administration, Department of Energy.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Transportation, after receiving testimony from Anthony Foxx, Secretary, and Calvin Scovel, Inspector General, both of the Department of Transportation.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Airland concluded a hearing to examine Army Unmanned Aircraft Vehicle and Air Force Remotely Piloted Aircraft Enterprises in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from General David G. Perkins, USA, Commanding General, Army Training and Doctrine Command, and General Herbert J. Carlisle, USAF, Commander, Air Combat Command, both of the Department of Defense; and Brenda S. Farrell, Director, Defense Capabilities and Management, Government Accountability Office.

GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities concluded a closed hearing to examine the Department of Defense's global counterterrorism strategy, after receiving testimony from Theresa M. Whelan, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict, Office of the Secretary, and Brigadier General Michael E. Kurilla, USA, Deputy Director for Special Operations, J–37, Joint Staff, both of the Department of Defense.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 2658, to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal years 2016 through 2017, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

A routine list in the Coast Guard.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the 2016 Water Resources Development Act, focusing on policies and projects, after receiving testimony from Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), and Lieutenant General Thomas Bostick, Chief of Engineers, both of the Department of Defense.

DHS MANAGEMENT AND ACQUISITION REFORM

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Department of Homeland Security management and acquisition reform, including H.R. 3572, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to reform, streamline, and make improvements to the Department of Homeland Security and support the Department's efforts to implement better policy, planning, management, and performance, after receiving testimony from Russell C. Deyo, Under Secretary for Management, Charles H. Fulghum, Deputy Under Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, and John Roth, Inspector General, all of the Department of Homeland Security; and Rebecca Gambler, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, and Michele Mackin, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management, both of the Government Accountability Office.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 1455, to provide access to medication-assisted therapy, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2256, to establish programs for health care provider training in Federal health care and medical facilities, to establish Federal co-prescribing guidelines, to establish a grant program with respect to naloxone, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 480, to amend and reauthorize the controlled substance monitoring program under section 399O of the Public Health Service Act, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2680, to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide comprehensive mental health reform, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

S. 2687, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to improve plans of safe care for infants affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON U.S. WORKERS

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest concluded a hearing to examine the impact of immigration on United States workers, after receiving testimony

from Peter Kirsanow, United States Commission on Civil Rights; George J. Borjas, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Benjamin Johnson, American Immigration Lawyers Association, and Steven A. Camarota, Center for Immigration Studies, both of Washington, D.C.; and David Dyssegaard Kallick, Fiscal Policy Institute Immigration Research Initiative, New York, New York.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine preventing a fiscal crisis in America, focusing on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, including S.J. Res. 2, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States requiring that the Federal budget be balanced, and S.J. Res. 6, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to balancing the budget, after receiving testimony from Senators Hatch and Durbin; and Douglas Holtz-Eakin, American Action Forum, Robert Greenstein, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Stephen Moore, FreedomWorks, Alan B. Morrison, George Washington University Law School, and Ilya Shapiro, Cato Institute, all of Washington, D.C.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 22 public bills, H.R. 4749–4770; and 3 resolutions, H. Res. 646–648, were introduced. **Pages H1418–19**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H1420**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 4360, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that a Federal employee who leaves Government service while under personnel investigation shall have a notation of any adverse findings under such investigation placed in such employee's official personnel file, and for other purposes, with amendments (H. Rept. 114–454);

H.R. 3583, to reform and improve the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Office of Emergency Communications, and the Office of Health Affairs of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–455, Part 1);

H.R. 4404, to require an exercise related to terrorist and foreign fighter travel, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–456);

H. Res. 639, authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674 (H. Rept. 114–457); and

H. Res. 649, providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 639) authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674 (H. Rept. 114–458). **Pages H1417–18**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Bost to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1391**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:31 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H1394**

Small Business Broadband Deployment Act: The House passed H.R. 4596, to ensure that small business providers of broadband Internet access service can devote resources to broadband deployment rather than compliance with cumbersome regulatory requirements, by a yea-and-nay vote of 411 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 124. **Pages H1396–1402**

Pursuant to the Rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Energy and Commerce now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. **Page H1396**

Withdrawn:

Veasey amendment (Printed in part A of H. Rept. 114–453) that was offered and subsequently withdrawn that would have required the FCC to also answer whether a permanent exemption would increase access to services offered by small internet service providers. **Pages H1400–01**

H. Res. 640, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 4596) and (H.R. 3797) was agreed to yesterday, March 15th.

Recess: The House recessed at 12:54 p.m. and reconvened at 1:02 p.m. **Page H1401**

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures which were debated on Monday, March 14th:

Extending the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project: H.R. 4416, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 418 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 125; and **Page H1402**

Extending the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project: H.R. 4434, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 417 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 126.

Pages H1402–03

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, March 17. **Page H1403**

Recess: The House recessed at 3:38 p.m. and reconvened at 5:33 p.m. **Page H1416**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that he had issued an Executive Order that expands the scope of previous Executive Orders and facilitates implementation of certain provisions of the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–117). **Pages H1416–17**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on pages H1396, H1416.

Senate Referral: S. 337 was held at the desk.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1401–02, H1402, and H1402–03. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

Committee Meetings

APPROPRIATIONS—NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the National Park Service. Testimony was heard from Jon Jarvis, Director, National Park Service.

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on Department of Agriculture, Research, Education, and Economics. Testimony was heard from Catherine E. Woteki, Under Secretary, Research, Education and Economics; Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Administrator, Agricultural Research Service; Sonny Ramaswamy, Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; Mary Bohman, Administrator, Economic Research Service; Joseph Reilly, Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service; and Michael Young, Budget Officer, Department of Agriculture.

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held a budget hearing on the Department of the Treasury. Testimony was heard from Jack Lew, Secretary, Department of the Treasury.

APPROPRIATIONS—NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education held a budget hearing on the National Institutes of Health. Testimony was heard from Francis S. Collins, Director, National Institutes of Health.

APPROPRIATIONS—NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the National Science Foundation. Testimony was heard from France A. Cordova, Director, National Science Foundation.

APPROPRIATIONS—INDIAN AFFAIRS; BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION SCHOOLS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on Indian Affairs; and an oversight hearing on Bureau of Indian Education Schools. Testimony was heard from Lawrence ''Larry'' Roberts, Acting Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; Charles ''Monty'' Roessel, Director, Bureau of Indian Education; and Michael Black, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs; and Melissa Emrey-Arras, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, Government Accountability Office.

APPROPRIATIONS—U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs held a budget hearing on U.S. Agency for International Development. Testimony was heard from Gayle Smith, Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development.

THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BUDGET REQUEST FROM THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "The Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Budget Request from the Military Departments". Testimony was heard from Patrick J. Murphy, Acting Secretary of the Army, U.S. Army; General Mark A. Milley, Chief of Staff of the Army, U.S. Army; Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy, U.S. Navy; Admiral John M. Richardson, Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Navy; General Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps, U.S. Marine Corps; Deborah Lee James, Secretary of the Air Force, U.S. Air Force; and General Mark A. Welsh III, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, U.S. Air Force.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET REQUEST FOR U.S. CYBER COMMAND: PREPARING FOR OPERATIONS IN THE CYBER DOMAIN

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities held a hearing entitled "Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request for U.S. Cyber Command: Preparing for Operations in the Cyber Domain". Testimony was heard from Admiral Michael Rogers, USN, Commander, U.S. Cyber Command.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 ARMY AND AIR FORCE ROTORCRAFT MODERNIZATION PROGRAMS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces held a hearing entitled "Fiscal Year 2017 Army and Air Force Rotorcraft Modernization Programs". Testimony was heard from Lieutenant General Arnold W. Bunch, Jr., USAF, Military Deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Acquisition); Lieutenant General James M. "Mike" Holmes, USAF, Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Requirements; Lieutenant General Michael E. Williamson, USA, Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology); and Major General Michael D. Lundy, USA, Commander, Army Aviation Center of Excellence.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

Committee on the Budget: Full Committee held a markup on the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2017. The Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 was ordered reported, as amended.

EXAMINING THE POLICIES AND PRIORITIES OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Examining the Policies and Priorities of the U.S. Department of Labor". Testimony was heard from Thomas Perez, Secretary, Department of Labor.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Energy and Power held a markup on the "Pipeline Safety Act of 2016". The "Pipeline Safety Act of 2016" was forwarded to the full committee, without amendment.

DISRUPTER SERIES: DIGITAL CURRENCY AND BLOCK CHAIN TECHNOLOGY

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade held a hearing entitled "Disrupter Series: Digital Currency and Block Chain Technology". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "The Semi-Annual Report of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection". Testimony was heard from Richard Cordray, Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

THE FDIC'S TARGETING OF REFUND ANTICIPATION LOANS

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled "The FDIC's Targeting of Refund Anticipation Loans". Testimony was heard from Fred W. Gibson, Jr., Acting Inspector General, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H. Res. 343, expressing concern regarding persistent and credible reports of systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience in the People's Republic of China, including from large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups; and H.R. 4678, to prohibit modification, abrogation, abandonment, or other related actions with respect to United States jurisdiction and control over United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, without congressional action. H. Res. 343 was ordered reported, as

amended. H.R. 4678 was ordered reported, without amendment.

DHS IN TODAY'S DANGEROUS WORLD: EXAMINING THE DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET AND READINESS TO COUNTER HOMELAND THREATS

Committee on Homeland Security: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "DHS in Today's Dangerous World: Examining the Department's Budget and Readiness to Counter Homeland Threats". Testimony was heard from Jeh C. Johnson, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a markup on a resolution to amend the Committee regulations collectively known as the Guide to Outfitting and Maintaining an Office of the U.S. House of Representatives; a resolution to approve regulations pursuant to H. Res. 5 regarding Congressional Member Organizations; a resolution to amend the Committee regulations collectively known as the Members' Congressional Handbook; and a resolution to amend the Committee regulations collectively known as the Committee Handbook. The resolution to amend the Committee regulations collectively known as the Guide to Outfitting and Maintaining an Office of the U.S. House of Representatives and the resolution to approve regulations pursuant to H. Res. 5 regarding Congressional Member Organizations were adopted, without amendment. The resolution to amend the Committee regulations collectively known as the Members' Congressional Handbook and the resolution to amend the Committee regulations collectively known as the Committee Handbook were adopted, as amended.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 4731, the "Refugee Program Integrity Restoration Act of 2016". H.R. 4731 was ordered reported, as amended.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee concluded a markup on H.R. 87, the "Shiloh National Military Park Boundary Adjustment and Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Designation Act"; H.R. 295, to reauthorize the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation program; H.R. 329, the "Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Consolidation Act of 2015"; H.R. 496, the "Alabama Hills National Scenic Area Establishment Act"; H.R. 1621, to modify the boundary of Petersburg National Battlefield in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and for other purposes; H.R. 1838, the "Clear Creek National Recreation Area and Conservation Act"; H.R. 2009, the "Pascua Yaqui Tribe Land Conveyance Act of 2015"; H.R. 2733, the "Nevada Native Nations Land Act"; H.R. 3070, the "EEZ Clarification Act"; H.R. 3211, to provide for the addition of certain real property to the reservation of the Siletz Tribe in the State of Oregon; H.R. 3826, the "Mount Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act"; H.R. 4579, the "Utah Test and Training Range Encroachment Prevention and Temporary Closure Act"; and H.R. 4680, to prepare the National Park Service for its Centennial in 2016 and for a second century of promoting and protecting the natural, historic, and cultural resources of our National Parks for the enjoyment of present and future generations, and for other purposes. The following bills were ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 87, H.R. 295, H.R. 329, H.R. 496, H.R. 1621, H.R. 1838, H.R. 2009, H.R. 2733, H.R. 3070, H.R. 3826, H.R. 4579, and H.R. 4680, H.R. 3211 was ordered reported, without amendment.

REBUILDING AFGHANISTAN: OVERSIGHT OF DEFENSE DEPARTMENT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Rebuilding Afghanistan: Oversight of Defense Department Infrastructure Projects". Testimony was heard from John Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction; Christine S. Abizaid, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia, Department of Defense; Howard Strickley, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Transatlantic Division, Department of Defense; and Randy Brown, Director, Air Force Civil Engineering Center, Department of Defense.

VA CYBERSECURITY AND IT OVERSIGHT

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Information Technology held a hearing entitled "VA Cybersecurity and IT Oversight". Testimony was heard from LaVerne Council, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology, Chief Information Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs; and Brent Arronte, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Department of Veterans Affairs.

EXAMINING THE RENEWABLE FUEL STANDARD

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on the Interior; and Subcommittee on Health Care, Benefits and Administrative Rules, joint hearing entitled "Examining the Renewable

Fuel Standard''. Testimony was heard from Christopher Grundler, Director, Office of Transportation and Air Quality, Environmental Protection Agency; and public witnesses.

HOUSE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO APPEAR AS AMICUS CURIAE ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN THE MATTER OF UNITED STATES, ET AL. V. TEXAS, ET AL., NO. 15–674

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a markup and hearing on H. Res. 639, authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al., No. 15–674. H. Res. 639 was ordered reported, without amendment. The committee granted, by record vote of 7–3, a closed rule. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Rules. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the resolution. The rule provides that the resolution shall be considered as read and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule provides one motion to recommit. Testimony was heard from Representatives Gowdy and Lofgren.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Research and Technology held a hearing entitled ''An Overview of the Budget Proposal for the National Institute of Standards and Technology for Fiscal Year 2017''. Testimony was heard from Willie E. May, Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing entitled ''An Overview of the Budget Proposal for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for Fiscal Year 2017''. Testimony was heard from Kathryn Sullivan, Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, Department of Commerce, and Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

SBA MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES: THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S PERSPECTIVE

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''SBA Management and Performance Challenges: The Inspector General's Perspective''. Testimony was heard from Peggy E. Gustafson, Inspector General, Small Business Administration.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity; and Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on draft legislation to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was heard from Carolyn Clancy, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

PRESERVING AND STRENGTHENING MEDICARE

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Preserving and Strengthening Medicare''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 4472, the ''Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act''; H.R. 4722, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require inclusion of the taxpayer's social security number to claim the refundable portion of the child tax credit; H.R. 4723, the ''Protecting Taxpayers by Recovering Improper Obamacare Subsidy Overpayments Act''; and H.R. 4724, the ''Reducing Duplicative and Ineffective Federal Funding Act''. The following bills were ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 4472, H.R. 4722, H.R. 4723, and H.R. 4724.

FBI FY 2017 BUDGET

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats held a hearing on FBI FY 2017 Budget. This hearing was closed.

Joint Meetings

VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATIONS

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Senate Committee concluded a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple Veterans Service Organizations, after receiving testimony from Virgil Courneya, Fleet

Reserve Association, Carson City, Nevada; Senior Master Sergeant Larry Hyland, USAF (Ret.), The Retired Enlisted Association, Palm Bay, Florida; David Brasuell, Idaho Department of Veterans Services, Boise, on behalf of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; Commander René, A. Campos, USN (Ret.), Military Officers Association of America, Alexandria, Virginia; Chief Master Sergeant Robert L. Frank, USAF (Ret.), Air Force Sergeants Association, Springfield, Virginia; Charles Susino, Jr., American Ex-Prisoners of War, Metuchen, New Jersey; Sergeant Major H. Gene Overstreet, USMC (Ret.), Non Commissioned Officers Association, Seguin, Texas; Jerome Blum, Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America, Colchester, Connecticut; and Paul Rieckhoff, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, New York, New York.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Labor, 10 a.m., SD–138.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the Department of Defense budget posture in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks, to hold hearings to examine S. 2177 and H.R. 959, bills to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Medgar Evers House, located in Jackson, Mississippi, S. 651 and H.R. 1289, bills to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire certain land in Martinez, California, for inclusion in the John Muir National Historic Site, H.R. 1949, to provide for the consideration and submission of site and design proposals for the National Liberty Memorial approved for establishment in the District of Columbia, S. 1329 and H.R. 2288, bills to remove the use restrictions on certain land transferred to Rockingham County, Virginia, H.R. 2880, to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, S. 1930 and H.R. 3371, bills to adjust the boundary of the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park to include the Wallis House and Harriston Hill, S. 119, to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for a lifetime National Recreational Pass for any veteran with a service-connected disability, S. 718, to modify the boundary of Petersburg National Battlefield in the Commonwealth of Virginia, S. 770, to authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance, S. 1577, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of East Rosebud Creek in Carbon County, Montana, as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, S. 1943, to modify the boundary of the Shiloh National Military Park located in the State of Tennessee and Mississippi, to establish Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the National Park System, S. 1975, to establish the Sewall-Belmont House National Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System, S. 1982, to authorize a Wall of Remembrance as part of the Korean War Veterans Memorial and to allow certain private contributions to fund the Wall of Remembrance, S. 1993, to establish the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to place youth and veterans in the United States in national service positions to protect, restore, and enhance the great outdoors of the United States, S. 2039, to designate the mountain at the Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming, as Devils Tower, S. 2061, to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas, S. 2309, to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the U.S. Civil Rights Network, S. 2608, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to place signage on Federal land along the trail known as the ''American Discovery Trail'', S. 2620, to facilitate the addition of park administration at the Coltsville National Historical Park, S. 2628, to authorize the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, 3 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine HealthCare.gov, focusing on a review of operations and enrollment, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the Administration's nuclear agenda, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management, to hold hearings to examine agency use of deference, 9 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 247, to amend section 349 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to deem specified activities in support of terrorism as renunciation of United States nationality, S. 2390, to provide adequate protections for whistleblowers at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, S. 2613, to reauthorize certain programs established by the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, S. 2614, to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, to reauthorize the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, and to promote initiatives that will reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism, and the nominations of Elizabeth J. Drake, of Maryland, Jennifer Choe Groves, of Virginia, and Gary Stephen Katzmann, of Massachusetts, each to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade, and

Clare E. Connors, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH–219.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine sudden price spikes in decades-old Rx drugs, 9:45 a.m., SD–562.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Examining USDA Organization and Program Administration—Part I'', 1 p.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing for American Indian and Alaska Native public and outside witnesses, 9 a.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Defense, oversight hearing on U.S. Central Command, 10 a.m., H–140 Capitol. This hearing will be closed.

Subcommittee on Homeland Security, budget hearing on U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 10 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, budget hearing on Department of Agriculture, Farm and Foreign Agriculture Service, 10:30 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing for American Indian and Alaska Native public and outside witnesses, 1 p.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled ''The Department of the Navy 2017 Operation and Maintenance Budget Request and Readiness Posture'', 9:30 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015: Examining Implementation of Medicare Payment Reforms'', 10 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, hearing entitled ''Privatizing the Internet Assigned Number Authority'', 10:15 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Implementation of the Department of the Interior's Law Enforcement Records System'', 9:30 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Examining Federal Administration of the Safe Drinking Water Act in Flint, Michigan—Part III'', 9 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Space, hearing entitled ''An Overview of the Budget Proposal for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for Fiscal Year 2017'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight and Regulations, hearing entitled ''Risky Business: Effects of New Joint Employer Standards for Small Firms'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on NSA and Cybersecurity, hearing on NSA FY 2017 Budget, 9 a.m., HVC–304. This hearing will be closed.

Final Résumé of Congressional Activity

FIRST SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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

DATA ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

January 6 through December 31, 2015

	Senate	*House*	*Total*
Days in session	168	157	..
Time in session	1,073 hrs., 39′	804 hrs., 59′	..
Congressional Record:			
Pages of proceedings	8,913	10,717	..
Extensions of Remarks	..	1,847	..
Public bills enacted into law	37	78	115
Private bills enacted into law	..	..	..
Bills in conference	1	1	..
Measures passed, total	441	525	966
Senate bills	98	38	..
House bills	82	323	..
Senate joint resolutions	4	3	..
House joint resolutions	3	5	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	11	6	..
House concurrent resolutions	24	28	..
Simple resolutions	219	122	..
Measures reported, total	*289	*373	662
Senate bills	219	9	..
House bills	36	288	..
Senate joint resolutions	..	..	..
House joint resolutions	..	3	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	1	..	..
House concurrent resolutions	..	3	..
Simple resolutions	33	70	..
Special reports	22	7	..
Conference reports	4	5	..
Measures pending on calendar	210	78	..
Measures introduced, total	2,823	5,060	7,883
Bills	2,427	4,302	..
Joint resolutions	28	79	..
Concurrent resolutions	26	105	..
Simple resolutions	342	574	..
Quorum calls	6	2	..
Yea-and-nay votes	339	**300	..
Recorded votes	..	403	..
Bills vetoed	4	1	..
Vetoes overridden	..	..	..

*These figures include all measures reported, even if there was no accompanying report. A total of 199 reports have been filed in the Senate, 385 reports have been filed in the House.

**Totals include Roll Call 300, which was vacated by unanimous consent on June 4, 2015.

DISPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

January 6 through December 31, 2015

Civilian nominations, totaling 366, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	173
Unconfirmed	181
Withdrawn	10
Returned to White House	2

Other Civilian nominations, totaling 3,802, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	3,383
Unconfirmed	97
Withdrawn	322

Air Force nominations, totaling 5,734, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	5,550
Unconfirmed	181
Withdrawn	3

Army nominations, totaling 5,214, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	3,474
Unconfirmed	1,740

Navy nominations, totaling 3,936, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	3,931
Unconfirmed	5

Marine Corps nominations, totaling 1,070, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	1,067
Unconfirmed	3

Summary

Total nominations carried over from the First Session	0
Total nominations received this Session	20,122
Total confirmed	17,578
Total unconfirmed	2,207
Total withdrawn	335
Total returned to the White House	2

HISTORY OF BILLS ENACTED INTO PUBLIC LAW

(114th Cong., 1st Sess.)

BILLS ENACTED INTO PUBLIC LAW (114TH, 1ST SESSION)

	Law No.
S. 136	114–62
S. 139	114–63
S. 178	114–22
S. 179	114–37
S. 230	114–56
S. 261	114–64
S. 501	114–57
S. 535	114–11
S. 565	114–65
S. 599	114–97
S. 611	114–98
S. 614	114–109
S. 665	114–12
S. 799	114–91
S. 802	114–24
S. 808	114–110
S. 971	114–39
S. 984	114–40
S. 986	114–69
S. 994	114–66
S. 1090	114–111
S. 1124	114–18
S. 1170	114–99
S. 1177	114–95
S. 1300	114–70
S. 1356	114–92
S. 1359	114–51
S. 1362	114–85
S. 1461	114–112
S. 1482	114–44
S. 1568	114–25
S. 1707	114–67
S. 2036	114–93
S. 2078	114–71
S. 2082	114–58
S. 2162	114–86
S. 2425	114–115
H.R. 2	114–10
H.R. 22	114–94
H.R. 23	114–52
H.R. 26	114–1
H.R. 33	114–3
H.R. 91	114–31
H.R. 203	114–2
H.R. 208	114–88
H.R. 212	114–45
H.R. 240	114–4
H.R. 313	114–75
H.R. 322	114–76
H.R. 323	114–77
H.R. 324	114–78
H.R. 431	114–5
H.R. 533	114–28
H.R. 558	114–79
H.R. 606	114–14
H.R. 615	114–29
H.R. 623	114–80
H.R. 639	114–89
H.R. 651	114–15
H.R. 719	114–53
H.R. 720	114–50
H.R. 728	114–32
H.R. 774	114–81
H.R. 876	114–42
H.R. 891	114–33
H.R. 893	114–30
H.R. 1020	114–59
H.R. 1075	114–16
H.R. 1092	114–8
H.R. 1138	114–46
H.R. 1191	114–17
H.R. 1213	114–6
H.R. 1295	114–27
H.R. 1314	114–74
H.R. 1321	114–114
H.R. 1326	114–34
H.R. 1350	114–35
H.R. 1442	114–82
H.R. 1527	114–7
H.R. 1531	114–47
H.R. 1624	114–60
H.R. 1626	114–43
H.R. 1690	114–20
H.R. 1884	114–83
H.R. 2029	114–113
H.R. 2048	114–23
H.R. 2051	114–54
H.R. 2131	114–48
H.R. 2146	114–26
H.R. 2250	114–96
H.R. 2252	114–13
H.R. 2262	114–90
H.R. 2270	114–101
H.R. 2297	114–102
H.R. 2353	114–21
H.R. 2496	114–19
H.R. 2499	114–38
H.R. 2559	114–49
H.R. 2617	114–61
H.R. 2620	114–36
H.R. 2693	114–103
H.R. 2820	114–104
H.R. 2835	114–68
H.R. 3059	114–84
H.R. 3116	114–72
H.R. 3236	114–41
H.R. 3594	114–105
H.R. 3614	114–55
H.R. 3819	114–73
H.R. 3831	114–106
H.R. 3996	114–87
H.R. 4246	114–107
H.J. Res. 10	114–9
H.J. Res. 76	114–108
H.J. Res. 78	114–100

BILLS VETOED

S. 1, to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline. Vetoed Feb. 24, 2015.

S.J. Res. 8, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures. Vetoed Mar. 31, 2015.

H.R. 1735, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes. Vetoed Oct. 22, 2015.

S.J. Res. 23, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of a rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to ''Standards of Performance for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from New, Modified, and Reconstructed Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units''. Vetoed Dec. 18, 2015.

S.J. Res. 24, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of a rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to ''Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units''. Vetoed Dec. 18, 2015.

Title	Bill No.	Date introduced	Committee		Date Reported		Report No.		Date of passage		Public Law	
			House	Senate	House	Senate	House 114–	Senate 114–	House	Senate	Date approved	No. 114–
To extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes.	H.R. 26	Jan. 6, 2015	FS Agr			.....	.....	.....	Jan. 7, 2015	Jan. 8, 2015	Jan. 12, 2015	1
To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.	H.R. 203	Jan. 7, 2015	VA	VA		Jan. 21, 2015	.....	34	Jan. 12, 2015	Feb. 3, 2015	Feb. 12, 2015	2
To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.	H.R. 33	Jan. 6, 2015	WM			.....	.....	.....	Jan. 12, 2015	Feb. 27, 2015	Feb. 27, 2015	3
Making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.	H.R. 240	Jan. 9, 2015	App Bud			.....	.....	.....	Jan. 14, 2015	Feb. 27, 2015	Mar. 4, 2015	4
To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in March of 1965, which served as a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.	H.R. 431	Jan. 21, 2015	FS	BHUA			.....	.....	Feb. 11, 2015	Mar. 2, 2015	Mar. 7, 2015	5
To make administrative and technical corrections to the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995.	H.R. 1213	Mar. 3, 2015	HA			.....	.....	.....	Mar. 4, 2015	Mar. 9, 2015	Mar. 20, 2015	6
To accelerate the income tax benefits for charitable cash contributions for the relief of the families of New York Police Department Detectives Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos, and for other purposes.	H.R. 1527	Mar. 23, 2015	WM			.....	.....	.....	Mar. 25, 2015	Mar. 27, 2015	Apr. 1, 2015	7
To designate the Federal building located at 2030 Southwest 145th Avenue in Miramar, Florida, as the "Benjamin P. Grogan and Jerry L. Dove Federal Building".	H.R. 1092	Feb. 25, 2015	TI			.....	.....	.....	Mar. 24, 2015	Mar. 27, 2015	Apr. 7, 2015	8
Providing for the reappointment of David M. Rubenstein as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.	H.J. Res. 10	Jan. 7, 2015	HA			.....	.....	.....	Mar. 26, 2015	Mar. 27, 2015	Apr. 7, 2015	9
To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and strengthen Medicare access by improving physician payments and making other improvements, to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2	Mar. 24, 2015	EC WM Jud Agr NR Bud			.....	.....	.....	Mar. 26, 2015	Apr. 14, 2015	Apr. 16, 2015	10
To promote energy efficiency	S. 535	Feb. 23, 2015	EC			.....	.....	.....	Apr. 21, 2015	Mar. 27, 2015	Apr. 30, 2015	11

To encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, is missing in connection with the officer's official duties, or an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer is received, and for other purposes.	S.	665	Mar. 4, 2015	Jud	Jud		Mar. 26, 2015	.....	0	May 12, 2015	Apr. 30, 2015	May 19, 2015	12
To clarify the effective date of certain provisions of the Border Patrol Agent Pay Reform Act of 2014, and for other purposes.	H.R.	2252	May 12, 2015	OGR			.....	.....	.....	May 14, 2015	May 19, 2015	May 19, 2015	13
To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude certain compensation received by public safety officers and their dependents from gross income.	H.R.	606	Jan. 28, 2015	WM			.....	.....	.....	May 12, 2015	May 14, 2015	May 22, 2015	14
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 820 Elmwood Avenue in Providence, Rhode Island, as the "Sister Ann Keefe Post Office".	H.R.	651	Feb. 2, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		May 6, 2015	.....	0	Apr. 29, 2015	May 11, 2015	May 22, 2015	15
To designate the United States Customs and Border Protection Port of Entry located at First Street and Pan American Avenue in Douglas, Arizona, as the "Raul Hector Castro Port of Entry".	H.R.	1075	Feb. 25, 2015	WM	EPW			.....	.....	Apr. 28, 2015	May 12, 2015	May 22, 2015	16
To provide for congressional review and oversight of agreements relating to Iran's nuclear program, and for other purposes.	H.R.	1191	Mar. 2, 2015	WM			.....	.....	.....	Mar. 17, 2015	May 7, 2015	May 22, 2015	17
To amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to improve the Act.	S.	1124	Apr. 28, 2015	E&W	HEL&P		Apr. 28, 2015	.....	0	May 12, 2015	May 6, 2015	May 22, 2015	18
To extend the authorization for the replacement of the existing Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Denver, Colorado, to make certain improvements in the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, and for other purposes.	H.R.	2496	May 21, 2015	VA			.....	.....	.....	May 21, 2015	May 22, 2015	May 22, 2015	19
To designate the United States courthouse located at 700 Grant Street in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as the "Joseph F. Weis Jr. United States Courthouse".	H.R.	1690	Mar. 26, 2015	TI	EPW	Apr. 23, 2015		90	.....	Apr. 28, 2015	May 21, 2015	May 29, 2015	20
To provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.	H.R.	2353	May 15, 2015	TI WM NR SST EC			.....	.....	.....	May 19, 2015	May 23, 2015	May 29, 2015	21
To provide justice for the victims of trafficking.	S.	178	Jan. 13, 2015		Jud	.....	Mar. 2, 2015	.....	0	May 19, 2015	Apr. 22, 2015	May 29, 2015	22
To reform the authorities of the Federal Government to require the production of certain business records, conduct electronic surveillance, use pen registers and trap and trace devices, and use other forms of information gathering for foreign intelligence, counterterrorism, and criminal purposes, and for other purposes.	H.R.	2048	Apr. 28, 2015	Jud Int FS		May 8, 2015	.....	109	.....	May 13, 2015	June 2, 2015	June 2, 2015	23
To authorize the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to provide assistance to support the rights of women and girls in developing countries, and for other purposes.	S.	802	Mar. 19, 2015		FR	.....	May 21, 2015	.....	0	June 1, 2015	May 23, 2015	June 12, 2015	24

Title	Bill No.	Date introduced	Committee		Date Reported		Report No.		Date of passage		Public Law	
			House	Senate	House	Senate	House 114–	Senate 114–	House	Senate	Date approved	No. 114–
To extend the authorization to carry out the replacement of the existing medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Denver, Colorado, to authorize transfers of amounts to carry out the replacement of such medical center, and for other purposes.	S. 1568	June 11, 2015			.....	.....	.....	.....	June 12, 2015	June 11, 2015	June 15, 2015	25
To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, and air traffic controllers to make penalty-free withdrawals from governmental plans after age 50, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2146	Apr. 30, 2015	WM	Fin			.....	.....	May 12, 2015	June 4, 2015	June 29, 2015	26
To extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act, the Generalized System of Preferences, the preferential duty treatment program for Haiti, and for other purposes.	H.R. 1295	Mar. 4, 2015	WM		Apr. 13, 2015	.....	71	.....	Apr. 15, 2015	May 14, 2015	June 29, 2015	27
To revoke the charter of incorporation of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma at the request of that tribe, and for other purposes.	H.R. 533	Jan. 26, 2015	NR	IA	Apr. 15, 2015		77	.....	June 1, 2015	June 24, 2015	July 6, 2015	28
To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to take administrative action to achieve and maintain interoperable communications capabilities among the components of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.	H.R. 615	Jan. 28, 2015	HS	HS&GA		May 21, 2015	.....	53	Feb. 2, 2015	June 11, 2015	July 6, 2015	29
To require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.	H.R. 893	Feb. 11, 2015	FS			.....	.....	.....	June 23, 2015	June 25, 2015	July 6, 2015	30
To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to issue, upon request, veteran identification cards to certain veterans.	H.R. 91	Jan. 6, 2015	VA	VA			.....	.....	May 18, 2015	June 22, 2015	July 20, 2015	31
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7050 Highway BB in Cedar Hill, Missouri, as the "Sergeant First Class William B. Woods, Jr. Post Office".	H.R. 728	Feb. 4, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		June 24, 2015	.....	0	June 15, 2015	July 8, 2015	July 20, 2015	32
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 141 Paloma Drive in Floresville, Texas, as the "Floresville Veterans Post Office Building".	H.R. 891	Feb. 11, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		June 24, 2015	.....	0	June 15, 2015	July 8, 2015	July 20, 2015	33
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2000 Mulford Road in Mulberry, Florida, as the "Sergeant First Class Daniel M. Ferguson Post Office".	H.R. 1326	Mar. 4, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		June 24, 2015	.....	0	June 15, 2015	July 8, 2015	July 20, 2015	34
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 442 East 167th Street in Bronx, New York, as the "Herman Badillo Post Office Building".	H.R. 1350	Mar. 10, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		June 24, 2015	.....	0	June 15, 2015	July 8, 2015	July 20, 2015	35
To amend the United States Cotton Futures Act to exclude certain cotton futures contracts from coverage under such Act.	H.R. 2620	June 2, 2015	Agr		June 23, 2015	.....	174	.....	June 23, 2015	July 9, 2015	July 20, 2015	36

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14 3rd Avenue, NW, in Chisholm, Minnesota, as the "James L. Oberstar Memorial Post Office Building".	S.	179	Jan. 13, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		May 6, 2015	.....	0	July 13, 2015	May 11, 2015	July 20, 2015	37
To amend the Small Business Act to increase access to capital for veteran entrepreneurs, to help create jobs, and for other purposes.	H.R.	2499	May 21, 2015	SB		June 25, 2015	.....	187	.....	July 13, 2015	July 23, 2015	July 28, 2015	38
To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an increase in the limit on the length of an agreement under the Medicare independence at home medical practice demonstration program.	S.	971	Apr. 16, 2015	WM EC	Fin	June 23, 2015		172	.....	July 15, 2015	Apr. 22, 2015	July 30, 2015	39
To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare beneficiary access to eye tracking accessories for speech generating devices and to remove the rental cap for durable medical equipment under the Medicare Program with respect to speech generating devices.	S.	984	Apr. 16, 2015	EC WM		June 24, 2015	.....	178	.....	July 15, 2015	Apr. 22, 2015	July 30, 2015	40
To provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, to provide resource flexibility to the Department of Veterans Affairs for health care services, and for other purposes.	H.R.	3236	July 28, 2015	TI WM EC SST NR VA E&W Bud HS			.....	.....	.....	July 29, 2015	July 30, 2015	July 31, 2015	41
To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require hospitals to provide certain notifications to individuals classified by such hospitals under observation status rather than admitted as inpatients of such hospitals.	H.R.	876	Feb. 11, 2015	WM EC	Fin	Mar. 13, 2015		39	.....	Mar. 16, 2015	July 27, 2015	Aug. 6, 2015	42
To reduce duplication of information technology at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.	H.R.	1626	Mar. 25, 2015	HS	HS&GA	June 17, 2015		162	.....	June 23, 2015	July 23, 2015	Aug. 6, 2015	43
To improve and reauthorize provisions relating to the application of the antitrust laws to the award of need-based educational aid.	S.	1482	June 2, 2015		Jud	.....	July 9, 2015	.....	0	July 27, 2015	July 14, 2015	Aug. 6, 2015	44
To amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to provide for the assessment and management of the risk of algal toxins in drinking water, and for other purposes.	H.R.	212	Jan. 8, 2015	EC		Feb. 24, 2015	.....	26	.....	Feb. 24, 2015	Aug. 5, 2015	Aug. 7, 2015	45
To establish certain wilderness areas in central Idaho and to authorize various land conveyances involving National Forest System land and Bureau of Land Management land in central Idaho, and for other purposes.	H.R.	1138	Feb. 26, 2015	NR		July 27, 2015	.....	229	.....	July 27, 2015	Aug. 4, 2015	Aug. 7, 2015	46
To amend title 5, United States Code, to provide a pathway for temporary seasonal employees in Federal land management agencies to compete for vacant permanent positions under internal merit promotion procedures, and for other purposes.	H.R.	1531	Mar. 23, 2015	OGR	HS&GA	June 25, 2015	Aug. 4, 2015	182	123	July 7, 2015	Aug. 5, 2015	Aug. 7, 2015	47
To designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 83 Meeting Street in Charleston, South Carolina, as the "J. Waties Waring Judicial Center".	H.R.	2131	Apr. 30, 2015	TI	EPW	June 4, 2015		137	.....	June 15, 2015	Aug. 5, 2015	Aug. 7, 2015	48
To designate the "PFC Milton A. Lee Medal of Honor Memorial Highway" in the State of Texas.	H.R.	2559	May 21, 2015	TI	EPW			.....	.....	June 15, 2015	Aug. 5, 2015	Aug. 7, 2015	49

Title	Bill No.	Date introduced	Committee		Date Reported		Report No.		Date of passage		Public Law	
			House	Senate	House	Senate	House 114–	Senate 114–	House	Senate	Date approved	No. 114–
To improve intergovernmental planning for and communication during security incidents at domestic airports, and for other purposes.	H.R. 720	Feb. 4, 2015	HS	CST		July 23, 2015	.....	92	Feb. 10, 2015	Aug. 5, 2015	Sept. 24, 2015	50
To allow manufacturers to meet warranty and labeling requirements for consumer products by displaying the terms of warranties on Internet websites, and for other purposes.	S. 1359	May 14, 2015	EC	CST		July 7, 2015	.....	77	Sept. 8, 2015	July 9, 2015	Sept. 24, 2015	51
To reauthorize the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, and for other purposes.	H.R. 23	Jan. 6, 2015	SST TI	CST		June 11, 2015	.....	62	Jan. 7, 2015	July 23, 2015	Sept. 30, 2015	52
To require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.	H.R. 719	Feb. 4, 2015	HS	CST		Aug. 4, 2015	.....	111	Feb. 10, 2015	Sept. 17, 2015	Sept. 30, 2015	53
To amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to extend the livestock mandatory price reporting requirements, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2051	Apr. 28, 2015	Agr	ANF	May 29, 2015	Sept. 17, 2015	132	206	June 9, 2015	Sept. 21, 2015	Sept. 30, 2015	54
To amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.	H.R. 3614	Sept. 25, 2015	TI WM SST			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 28, 2015	Sept. 29, 2015	Sept. 30, 2015	55
To provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation located in Bethel, Alaska.	S. 230	Jan. 21, 2015		IA	.....	May 11, 2015	.....	38	Sept. 16, 2015	June 25, 2015	Sept. 30, 2015	56
To make technical corrections to the Navajo water rights settlement in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes.	S. 501	Feb. 12, 2015	NR	IA	Sept. 8, 2015	May 11, 2015	255	41	Sept. 16, 2015	May 21, 2015	Sept. 30, 2015	57
To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.	S. 2082	Sept. 25, 2015			.....	.....	.....	.....	Sept. 30, 2015	Sept. 25, 2015	Sept. 30, 2015	58
To define STEM education to include computer science, and to support existing STEM education programs at the National Science Foundation.	H.R. 1020	Feb. 20, 2015	SST	CST		Aug. 4, 2015	.....	115	Feb. 25, 2015	Sept. 24, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	59
To amend title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to revise the definition of small employer.	H.R. 1624	Mar. 25, 2015	EC			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 28, 2015	Oct. 1, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	60
To amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to reduce a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa.	H.R. 2617	June 2, 2015	E&W			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 28, 2015	Sept. 30, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	61
To amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included with mothers of such veterans as preference eligibles for treatment in the civil service.	S. 136	Jan. 8, 2015	OGR	HS&GA	Sept. 18, 2015	May 5, 2015	263	35	Sept. 28, 2015	May 11, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	62

To permanently allow an exclusion under the Supplemental Security Income program and the Medicaid program for compensation provided to individuals who participate in clinical trials for rare diseases or conditions.	S.	139	Jan. 8, 2015	WM EC	Fin			.....	.....	Sept. 28, 2015	July 16, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	63
To designate the United States courthouse located at 200 NW 4th Street in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, as the William J. Holloway, Jr. United States Courthouse.	S.	261	Jan. 27, 2015	TI	EPW	Sept. 8, 2015	May 4, 2015	248	0	Sept. 24, 2015	May 21, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	64
To reduce the operation and maintenance costs associated with the Federal fleet by encouraging the use of remanufactured parts, and for other purposes.	S.	565	Feb. 25, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		May 22, 2015	.....	59	Sept. 28, 2015	June 15, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	65
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1 Walter Hammond Place in Waldwick, New Jersey, as the "Staff Sergeant Joseph D'Augustine Post Office Building".	S.	994	Apr. 16, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		May 6, 2015	.....	0	Sept. 24, 2015	May 11, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	66
To designate the Federal building located at 617 Walnut Street in Helena, Arkansas, as the "Jacob Trieber Federal Building, United States Post Office, and United States Court House".	S.	1707	July 7, 2015		EPW	.....		.....	.....	Sept. 24, 2015	Aug. 5, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	67
To actively recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection Officers.	H.R.	2835	June 18, 2015	HS AS			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 28, 2015	Oct. 1, 2015	Oct. 16, 2015	68
To require the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust 4 parcels of Federal land for the benefit of certain Indian Pueblos in the State of New Mexico.	S.	986	Apr. 16, 2015		IA	.....	Aug. 4, 2015	.....	114	Oct. 6, 2015	Sept. 22, 2015	Oct. 16, 2015	69
To amend the section 221 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide relief for adoptive families from immigrant visa fees in certain situations.	S.	1300	May 12, 2015		Jud	.....	July 9, 2015	.....	0	Oct. 6, 2015	July 14, 2015	Oct. 16, 2015	70
To reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and for other purposes.	S.	2078	Sept. 24, 2015		FR	.....	Sept. 24, 2015	.....	0	Oct. 6, 2015	Sept. 30, 2015	Oct. 16, 2015	71
To extend by 15 years the authority of the Secretary of Commerce to conduct the quarterly financial report program.	H.R.	3116	July 20, 2015	OGR	HS&GA	July 29, 2015		237	.....	Sept. 24, 2015	Oct. 6, 2015	Oct. 22, 2015	72
To provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.	H.R.	3819	Oct. 23, 2015	TI EC WM NR SST			.....	.....	.....	Oct. 27, 2015	Oct. 28, 2015	Oct. 29, 2015	73
To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.	H.R.	1314	Mar. 4, 2015	WM		Apr. 13, 2015	.....	67	.....	Apr. 15, 2015	May 22, 2015	Nov. 2, 2015	74
To amend title 5, United States Code, to provide leave to any new Federal employee who is a veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for such disability, and for other purposes.	H.R.	313	Jan. 13, 2015	OGR	HS&GA	June 25, 2015		180	.....	Sept. 28, 2015	Oct. 26, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	75
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16105 Swingley Ridge Road in Chesterfield, Missouri, as the "Sgt. Zachary M. Fisher Post Office".	H.R.	322	Jan. 13, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		Oct. 8, 2015	.....	0	Sept. 24, 2015	Oct. 20, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	76

Title	Bill No.	Date introduced	Committee		Date Reported		Report No.		Date of passage		Public Law	
			House	Senate	House	Senate	House 114–	Senate 114–	House	Senate	Date approved	No. 114–
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 55 Grasso Plaza in St. Louis, Missouri, as the "Sgt. Amanda N. Pinson Post Office".	H.R. 323	Jan. 13, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		Oct. 8, 2015	.....	0	Sept. 24, 2015	Oct. 20, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	77
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 11662 Gravois Road in St. Louis, Missouri, as the "Lt. Daniel P. Riordan Post Office".	H.R. 324	Jan. 13, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		Oct. 8, 2015	.....	0	Sept. 24, 2015	Oct. 20, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	78
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 55 South Pioneer Boulevard in Springboro, Ohio, as the "Richard 'Dick' Chenault Post Office Building".	H.R. 558	Jan. 27, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		Oct. 8, 2015	.....	0	Sept. 24, 2015	Oct. 20, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	79
To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group, and for other purposes.	H.R. 623	Jan. 30, 2015	TI HS	HS&GA		Sept. 21, 2015	.....	145	Feb. 2, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	80
To strengthen enforcement mechanisms to stop illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, to amend the Tuna Conventions Act of 1950 to implement the Antigua Convention, and for other purposes.	H.R. 774	Feb. 5, 2015	NR TI Jud	CST	July 20, 2015		212	.....	July 27, 2015	Oct. 21, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	81
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 90 Cornell Street in Kingston, New York, as the "Staff Sergeant Robert H. Dietz Post Office Building".	H.R. 1442	Mar. 18, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		Oct. 8, 2015	.....	0	Sept. 24, 2015	Oct. 20, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	82
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 206 West Commercial Street in East Rochester, New York, as the "Officer Daryl R. Pierson Memorial Post Office Building".	H.R. 1884	Apr. 16, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		Oct. 8, 2015	.....	0	Sept. 24, 2015	Oct. 20, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	83
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4500 SE 28th Street, Del City, Oklahoma, as the James Robert Kalsu Post Office Building.	H.R. 3059	July 14, 2015	OGR	HS&GA		Oct. 8, 2015	.....	0	Sept. 24, 2015	Oct. 20, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	84
To amend title XI of the Social Security Act to clarify waiver authority regarding programs of all-inclusive care for the elderly (PACE programs).	S. 1362	May 18, 2015	WM EC	Fin		July 30, 2015	.....	108	Oct. 21, 2015	Aug. 5, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	85
To establish a 10-year term for the service of the Librarian of Congress.	S. 2162	Oct. 7, 2015	HA			.....	.....	.....	Oct. 20, 2015	Oct. 7, 2015	Nov. 5, 2015	86
To provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.	H.R. 3996	Nov. 16, 2015	TI EC WM NR SST			.....	.....	.....	Nov. 16, 2015	Nov. 19, 2015	Nov. 20, 2015	87
To improve the disaster assistance programs of the Small Business Administration.	H.R. 208	Jan. 8, 2015	SB	SBE	June 25, 2015		186	.....	July 13, 2015	Oct. 21, 2015	Nov. 25, 2015	88
To amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to drug scheduling recommendations by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and with respect to registration of manufacturers and distributors seeking to conduct clinical testing.	H.R. 639	Feb. 2, 2015	EC Jud	HEL&P	Mar. 16, 2015		41	.....	Mar. 16, 2015	Oct. 26, 2015	Nov. 25, 2015	89

To facilitate a pro-growth environment for the developing commercial space industry by encouraging private sector investment and creating more stable and predictable regulatory conditions, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2262	May 12, 2015	SST	CST	May 18, 2015		119	.....	May 21, 2015	Nov. 10, 2015	Nov. 25, 2015	90
To address problems related to prenatal opioid use.	S. 799	Mar. 19, 2015		HEL&P	.....	Oct. 1, 2015	.....	0	Nov. 16, 2015	Oct. 22, 2015	Nov. 25, 2015	91
To authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.	S. 1356	May 14, 2015			.....	.....	.....	.....	Nov. 5, 2015	May 14, 2015	Nov. 25, 2015	92
To suspend the current compensation packages for the chief executive officers of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and for other purposes.	S. 2036	Sept. 15, 2015			.....	.....	.....	.....	Nov. 16, 2015	Sept. 15, 2015	Nov. 25, 2015	93
To authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes.	H.R. 22	Jan. 6, 2015	WM	Fin		Feb. 12, 2015	.....	3	Jan. 6, 2015	July 30, 2015	Dec. 4, 2015	94
To reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to ensure that every child achieves.	S. 1177 (H.R. 5)	Apr. 30, 2015	E&W FS	HEL&P	Feb. 20, 2015	Apr. 30, 2015	24	0	Nov. 17, 2015	July 16, 2015	Dec. 10, 2015	95
Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016.	H.R. 2250	May 12, 2015	App	App	May 12, 2015	June 11, 2015	110	64	May 19, 2015	Dec. 10, 2015	Dec. 11, 2015	96
To extend and expand the Medicaid emergency psychiatric demonstration project.	S. 599	Feb. 26, 2015		Fin	.....	July 30, 2015	.....	101	Nov. 16, 2015	Sept. 28, 2015	Dec. 11, 2015	97
To amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems, and for other purposes.	S. 611	Feb. 27, 2015	EC	EPW	Nov. 19, 2015	May 18, 2015	346	47	Nov. 30, 2015	June 9, 2015	Dec. 11, 2015	98
To amend title 39, United States Code, to extend the authority of the United States Postal Service to issue a semipostal to raise funds for breast cancer research, and for other purposes.	S. 1170	Apr. 30, 2015	OGR EC AS	HS&GA		Sept. 17, 2015	.....	144	Dec. 1, 2015	Sept. 22, 2015	Dec. 11, 2015	99
Making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes.	H.J. Res. 78	Dec. 16, 2015	App			.....	.....	.....	Dec. 16, 2015	Dec. 16, 2015	Dec. 16, 2015	100
To redesignate the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, located in the State of Washington, as the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, to establish the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial within the wildlife refuge, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2270	May 12, 2015	NR		Nov. 16, 2015	.....	335	.....	Nov. 30, 2015	Dec. 14, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	101
To prevent Hizballah and associated entities from gaining access to international financial and other institutions, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2297	May 13, 2015	FA FS	BHUA			.....	.....	May 14, 2015	Nov. 17, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	102
To designate the arboretum at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, as the "Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum".	H.R. 2693	June 9, 2015	VA	VA			.....	.....	Dec. 8, 2015	Dec. 10, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	103
To reauthorize the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2820	June 18, 2015	EC	HEL&P	Sept. 8, 2015	Dec. 3, 2015	242	0	Sept. 8, 2015	Dec. 9, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	104
To extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, and for other purposes.	H.R. 3594	Sept. 24, 2015	E&W			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 28, 2015	Dec. 16, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	105
To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the annual comment period for payment rates under Medicare Advantage.	H.R. 3831	Oct. 26, 2015	WM EC			.....	.....	.....	Dec. 10, 2015	Dec. 16, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	106

Title	Bill No.	Date introduced	Committee		Date Reported		Report No.		Date of passage		Public Law	
			House	Senate	House	Senate	House 114–	Senate 114–	House	Senate	Date approved	No. 114–
To exempt for an additional 4-year period, from the application of the means-test presumption of abuse under chapter 7, qualifying members of reserve components of the Armed Forces and members of the National Guard who, after September 11, 2001, are called to active duty or to perform a homeland defense activity for not less than 90 days.	H.R. 4246	Dec. 15, 2015	Jud			.....	.....	.....	Dec. 16, 2015	Dec. 17, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	107
Appointing the day for the convening of the second session of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.	H.J. Res. 76	Dec. 15, 2015			.....	.....	.....	.....	Dec. 15, 2015	Dec. 17, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	108
To provide access to and use of information by Federal agencies in order to reduce improper payments, and for other purposes.	S. 614	Feb. 27, 2015		HS&GA	.....	July 21, 2015	.....	86	Dec. 7, 2015	July 28, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	109
To establish the Surface Transportation Board as an independent establishment, and for other purposes.	S. 808	Mar. 19, 2015		CST	.....	May 21, 2015	.....	52	Dec. 10, 2015	June 18, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	110
To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide eligibility for broadcasting facilities to receive certain disaster assistance, and for other purposes.	S. 1090	Apr. 27, 2015	TI	HS&GA		Sept. 15, 2015	.....	142	Dec. 16, 2015	Sept. 17, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	111
To provide for the extension of the enforcement instruction on supervision requirements for outpatient therapeutic services in critical access and small rural hospitals through 2015.	S. 1461	May 22, 2015	EC WM	Fin		July 30, 2015	.....	109	Dec. 8, 2015	Sept. 10, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	112
Making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2029	Apr. 24, 2015	App	App	Apr. 24, 2015	May 21, 2015	92	57	Apr. 30, 2015	Nov. 10, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	113
To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to prohibit the manufacture and introduction or delivery for introduction into interstate commerce of rinse-off cosmetics containing intentionally-added plastic microbeads.	H.R. 1321	Mar. 4, 2015	EC		Dec. 7, 2015	.....	371	.....	Dec. 7, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	Dec. 28, 2015	114
To amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to improve payments for complex rehabilitation technology and certain radiation therapy services, to ensure flexibility in applying the hardship exception for meaningful use for the 2015 EHR reporting period for 2017 payment adjustments, and for other purposes.	S. 2425	Dec. 18, 2015			.....	.....	.....	.....	Dec. 18, 2015	Dec. 18, 2015	Dec. 28, 2015	115

TABLE OF COMMITTEE ABBREVIATIONS

AG .....Aging
Agr .....Agriculture
ANF .....Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
App .....Appropriations
AS .....Armed Services
BHUA ....Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Bud .....Budget
CST .....Commerce, Science and Transportation
E&W .....Education and the Workforce
EC .....Energy and Commerce
ENR .....Energy and Natural Resources
EPW .....Environment and Public Works
Eth .....Ethics
Fin .....Finance
FS .....Financial Services
FA .....Foreign Affairs
FR .....Foreign Relations
HEL&P ..Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
HS .....Homeland Security
HS&GA ..Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
HA .....House Administration
IA .....Indian Affairs
Int .....Intelligence
Jud .....Judiciary
NR .....Natural Resources

OGR .....Oversight and Government Reform
R .....Rules
RAdm ....Rules and Administration
SST .....Science, Space, and Technology
SB .....Small Business
SBE .....Small Business and Entrepreneurship
TI .....Transportation and Infrastructure
VA .....Veterans' Affairs
WM .....Ways and Means

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 17

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 12:45 p.m.), Senate will begin consideration of S. Res. 377, Directing Senate Legal Counsel, and vote on adoption of the resolution at approximately 1:45 p.m.

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

9 a.m., Thursday, March 17

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H. Res. 639—Authorizing the Speaker to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the House of Representatives in the matter of United States, et al. v. Texas, et al. (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

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