The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker.

**MORNING-HOUR DEBATE**

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

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

**CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP**

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. Foxx) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it is good news that the jobless rate has dropped to 4.3 percent, the lowest level in more than a decade. However, we still face tough challenges in building an economy that supplies employers with the talent needed to be competitive and in educating workers with the skills needed for success in today’s economy.

Because our economy increasingly requires a more skilled workforce, the next generation of workers needs education beyond the traditional high school degree to find good-paying jobs that enable them to move up the career ladder and firmly into the middle class.

To solve these challenges, we need a strong demand-driven workforce development system that aligns education with the needs of employers. That is why the Committee on Education and the Workforce, which I am proud to chair, recently advanced, with unanimous support, legislation that will strengthen skills-focused education and help equip more students with the skills they need to achieve success.

However, the real solutions lie outside of Washington. That is why I am pleased the private sector is leading the way so that workers in industries have the skills to compete and prosper in the global economy.

I want to commend companies like JPMorgan Chase, Toyota, IBM, Boeing, and so many others for their commitment to creating public-private partnerships aimed at closing our skills gap and helping America’s employers and workers succeed.

Recently, I had the opportunity to join a roundtable discussion with workforce development experts from a wide array of nonprofits, educational institutions, and workforce development leaders. They are working with employers to build sustainable and robust pipelines of talent to fill growing needs in critical sectors, such as healthcare and technology.

Communities across the country are looking to power their businesses with talent from their local communities, and they are doing this by developing partnerships that focus on employer engagement strategies, creating or expanding career pathways, reducing barriers to employment, and more effectively connecting students and graduates to jobs.

Helping people gain the skills they need to compete in the workforce is also a powerful approach to expanding access to opportunity and promoting economic mobility, because even as the economy improves, there are still vulnerable people at risk of being left behind.

Without the right skills and meaningful postsecondary credentials, these young people face entering the workforce without very bright prospects or, worse, unemployed and out of school.

We also need to create more opportunities for workers to obtain good-paying jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than a college degree. This can help reduce unemployment by aligning education programs with the skills employers need.

As an example, JPMorgan Chase’s New Skills for Youth initiative is helping expand high-quality education programs that begin in high school and end with postsecondary credentials and lead to long-term careers. Young people can gain the skills needed to enter high-paying occupations in growing fields, such as robotics, medical science, and coding, to build a promising future.

Failing to prepare young people with the right skills and education for these jobs is a missed opportunity for them personally, for our country, and our economy.

By working together on educational initiatives like New Skills for Youth, employers, nonprofits, and educational institutions can drive economic growth, promote greater mobility in communities throughout the country, and help more Americans achieve a lifetime of success.

**HONORING FALLEN SAILORS**

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, firstly, I could not take this microphone on this occasion and not remember Congressman Scalise, his injuries, and wish him and his family well, and the other victims of the cowardly and horrific assault on our colleagues and on our government last week in Virginia, but I came here specifically to honor seven Americans who died on the USS Fitzgerald.

Seven United States naval soldiers died when the Fitzgerald collided with a Japanese freighter. And there was a story this morning in The New York Times, another on the Daily Beast, and I am sure there are others, that caught my attention.

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.
The New York Times story showed the divergent backgrounds of these seven sailors. They are all Americans, but one has roots in Okinawa, another’s roots were in the Philippines, another Vietnam, another Guatemala, then there was an Ohioan and a Virginian and a sailor named Martin from Maryland.

They are representative of our United States Navy, from different backgrounds, given an opportunity to serve. Some because the United States Navy personnel. And they come together in a camaraderie to serve our country and to serve each other as shipmates in a way that is gratifying to witness and is special for our Nation.

Now, I want to mention who these sailors were, because they need to be memorialized here. Xavier Martin was from Maryland; Shingo Douglass was from Okinawa and San Diego, California; Dakota Rigby, Palmyra, Virginia; Carlos Sibayan from Chula Vista, California, but the Philippines was the spot of origin, and his grandfather, who is a Filipino, also served in our United States Navy; Ngoc Truong Huynh, Vietnam, Oakville, Connecticut; Noe Hernandez was from Texas by way of Guatemala; and finally, Gary Rehm, Jr., from Ohio.

The Daily Beast told me something about Gary Rehm, Jr., that I wouldn’t have garnered from The New York Times story that was so wonderful as it described the backgrounds and really the rainbow that these seven men made of America.

Gary Rehm was due to finish his service in 3 months, and he considered everybody on that ship, all the sailors, his kids. He had no children of his own, but the sailors were his kids. He rescued up to 20 sailors to see to it after the crash that they survived and then went to try to rescue six others, and it is at that point that Gary Rehm lost his life. He lost his life serving his shipmates, as he called them, his kids, his fellow sailors.

They were shipmates and sailors and United States naval personnel. They weren’t Filipinos or Vietnamese or any other description. Gary Rehm, Jr., was a hero trying to save others. The other six were heroes, too, serving our country, and they lost their lives.

It was a great experience to be on the Providence, and it is a great honor to represent Millington Naval Air Base, which serves our country for personnel and recruitment purposes.

I am honored to be in this Congress, but more honored to represent people in the United States Naval Academy, I thank those seven for their valiant efforts and for giving their lives in service to their country.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today. Accordingly (at 12 o’clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

God, Father of us all, we give You thanks for giving us another day. Please send Your spirit upon this assembly, that the men and women who serve the United States in contentious times such as these might better work together for the benefit of our Nation. This is not easy, so bless them with Your wisdom and give them the patience and understanding to rise to the demands of their calling. So also we ask Your blessing upon our world, where so many live and unfortunately die in nations and regions cursed by violence and division. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, be with us this day and all days, and may all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER 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.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on World Refugee Day to share the remarkable story of one of my younger constituents, 8-year-old Raul Ortiz.

Raul was born amidst the gang-driven violence in Honduras. When he was 5, Raul was kidnapped and held for ransom by a crime cartel. Following his release, he and his mother later fled to the safety and the security offered by the United States.

Raul and his mom rightly worried for their security if they were forced to return to Honduras, and are seeking asylum in our country.

Raul is visiting Washington today to share a letter he wrote to President Trump to remember and protect refugee children like himself.

Writing of what the United States means to him, Raul writes: “Here we are safe, and we have hope to see another tomorrow.”

Mr. Speaker, we are a country that was founded and built by immigrants and refugees, many fleeing oppression and violence.

Raul’s story is our story. We cannot allow the door of opportunity and safety to close on the next generation of Americans like Raul seeking refuge here.

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:


Hon. PAUL D. RYAN, 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 June 19, 2017, at 1:49 p.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 782. With best wishes, I am, Sincerely, KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 3 p.m. today. Accordingly (at 2 o’clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1506

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CHENEY) at 3 o’clock and 6 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair
MOBILE WORKFORCE STATE INCOME TAX SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1393) to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1393

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 “Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. LIMITATIONS ON STATE WITHHOLDING AND TAXATION OF EMPLOYEE INCOME. (a) IN GENERAL.—No part of the wages or other remuneration earned by an employee who performs employment duties in more than one State shall be subject to income tax in any State other than—

(1) the State of the employee’s residence; and

(2) the State within which the employee is present and performing employment duties for more than 30 days during the calendar year in which the wages or other remuneration is earned.

(b) WAGES OR OTHER REMUNERATION.—Wages or other remuneration earned in any calendar year shall not be subject to State income tax withholding and reporting requirements unless the employee is subject to income tax in such State under subsection (a). Income tax withholding and reporting requirements under subsection (a)(2) shall apply to wages or other remuneration earned as of any commencement date of employment duties in the State during the calendar year.

(c) OPERATING RULES.—For purposes of determining the location of an employee’s employment duties performed in a State, the time and attendance system in which—

(1) an employer may rely on an employee’s annual determination of the time expected to be spent by such employee in the States in which the employee will perform duties absent—

(A) the employee’s actual knowledge of fraud by the employee in making the determination; or

(B) collusion between the employer and the employee to evade tax;

(2) except as provided in paragraph (3), if records are maintained by an employer in the regular course of business that record the location of an employee, such records shall not preclude an employer’s ability to rely on an employee’s determination under paragraph (1); and

(3) in the case of paragraph (2), if an employer, at its sole discretion, maintains a time and attendance system that tracks where the employee performs duties on a daily basis, employers also do not preclude an employer’s ability to rely on the employee’s determination under paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL RULES.—For purposes of this Act:

(1) DAY.—(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), an employee’s time considered present and performing employment duties within a State for a day if the employee performs more of the employee’s employment duties within such State than in any other State during a day.

(B) If an employee performs employment duties in a resident State and in only one nonresident State during one day, such employee shall be considered present and performing more of the employee’s employment duties in the nonresident State than in the resident State for such day.

(2) EMPLOYEE.—The term “employee” has the same meaning given to it by the State in which the employment duties are performed, except that the term “employee” shall not include a professional athlete, professional entertainer, qualified production employee, or certain public figures.

(3) PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE.—The term “professional athlete” means a person who performs services in a professional athletic event, provided that the wages or other remuneration are paid to such person for performing services in his or her capacity as a professional athlete.

(4) PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINER.—The term “professional entertainer” means a person of prominence who performs services in the professional performing arts for wages or other remuneration on a per-event basis, provided that the wages or other remuneration are paid to such person for performing services in his or her capacity as a professional entertainer.

(5) QUALIFIED PRODUCTION EMPLOYEE.—The term “qualified production employee” means a person who performs production services of any nature directly in connection with a State qualified, certified or approved film, television or other commercial video production for wages or other remuneration, provided that the wages or other remuneration paid to such person are qualified production costs or expenditures under such State’s qualified, certified or approved film incentive program for film, television or other video production for wages or other remuneration must be subject to withholding under such film incentive program as a condition to treating such wages or other remuneration as a qualified production cost or expenditure.

(6) CERTAIN PUBLIC FIGURES.—The term “certain public figures” means persons of prominence who perform services for wages or other remuneration on a per-event basis, provided that the wages or other remuneration are paid to such person for services provided at a discrete event, in the nature of a speech, public appearance, or similar event.

(7) EMPLOYEE.—The term “employee” has the meaning given such term in section 3401(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 3401(d)), unless such term is defined by the State in which the employee’s employment duties are performed, in which case the State’s definition prevails.

(8) STATE.—The term “State” means any of the several States.

(9) TIME AND ATTENDANCE SYSTEM.—The term “time and attendance system” means a system in which—

(A) the employee is required on a contemporaneous basis to record his work location for every activity performed outside of the State in which the employee’s employment duties are primarily performed; and

(B) the system is designed to allow the employee to allocate the employee’s wages for income tax purposes among all States in which the employee performs employment duties for such employer.

(10) WAGES OR OTHER REMUNERATION.—The term “wages or other remuneration” may be limited by the State in which the employment duties are performed.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICABILITY. (a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act shall take effect on January 1 of the second calendar year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—This Act shall not apply to any tax obligation that accrues before the effective date of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 1393, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act provides a clear, uniform framework for when States may tax nonresident employees who travel to the taxing State to perform work. In particular, this bill prevents States from imposing income tax compliance burdens on nonresidents who work in a foreign State for 30 days or fewer in a year.

The State tax laws that determine when a nonresident must pay a foreign State’s income tax and when employers must withhold this tax are numerous and varied. Some States tax income earned within their borders by nonresidents even if the employee only works in the State for just 1 day.

These complicated rules impact everyone who travels for work and many industries. As just one example, the Judiciary Committee heard testimony in 2015 that the patchwork of State laws resulted in a manufacturing company issuing 50 W–2s to a single employee for a single year. The company executive also noted, regarding the compliance burden, that “many of our affected employees make less than $50,000 per year and have limited resources to seek professional advice.”

States generally allow a credit for income taxes paid to another State; however, it is not always dollar for dollar when local taxes are factored in. Credit limitations also do not relieve workers of substantial paperwork burdens.

There are substantial burdens on employers as well. The committee heard

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testimony in 2014 that businesses, including small businesses, that operate interstate are subject to significant regulatory burdens with regard to compliance with nonresident State income tax withholding laws. These burdens distract from productive activity and job creation.

Nevertheless, some object that the States will lose revenue if the bill is enacted. However, an analysis from Ernst & Young found that the bill’s revenue impact is minimal. There is little doubt that gaming because the amount of money at issue, taxes on less than 30 days’ wages, is minimal.

Also, the income tax generally has to be paid; the question is merely to whom. Nor does this bill violate federalism principles. On the contrary, it is an exercise of Congress’ Commerce Clause authority in precisely the situation for which it was intended.

The Supreme Court has explained that the Commerce Clause was informed by structural concerns about the effects of State regulation on the national economy. Under the Articles of Confederation, State taxes and duties hindered and suppressed interstate commerce. The Framers intended the Commerce Clause as a cure for these structural ills. This bill fits squarely within this authority by bringing uniformity to cases of de minimis presence by interstate workers in order to reduce compliance costs.

Last year’s version of the bill passed the House on suspension by voice vote. This year’s version is nearly identical, with two changes:

The professional entertainer exemption is narrowed from “a person who performs services” to “a person of prominence who performs services” in order to ensure that other entertainers retain the benefit of the bill’s protections.

Second, the list of exclusions is expanded to cover film production employees if associated tax credits for interstate productions are contingent on employees if associated tax credits for interstate productions are contingent on in-state productions are contingent on in-state production to cover film production employees if associated tax credits for interstate production.

In my 25 years as an attorney and a small-business owner, I am uniquely aware of the task of complying with the complexities of the various State income taxes, especially when you take into another State for business.

The burden to comply is a particular burden to small businesses, as well as their employees, because they simply do not have the resources and cannot absorb the compliance costs. As a result, the current tax framework puts small businesses on the critical path of our economy, at a substantial competitive disadvantage relative to larger businesses.
And complex reporting requirements punish the employees, too. The time and overall expenses that result from filing all of this paperwork is overwhelming, and, in many cases, financially devastating. It is all because they had the audacity to work outside of their home States.

Rather than driving profits back into their businesses and community by expanding payrolls and reducing the price of consumer goods, businesses are being forced to spend their hard-earned income on complying with a menagerie of convoluted and ridiculous State income tax laws.

While crafting this legislation in committee, we heard a lot of anecdotal information and a lot of personal testimonials. In fact, we heard firsthand testimony from an employee, indicating that his employer had to file over 10,000 W–2s on behalf of their numerous employees, primarily because they had crossed State lines for work. He went on to say that one of his workers had to file 50 W–2s—that is 50 W–2s—just for himself.

That didn’t make sense to us, and it certainly doesn’t make sense to most Americans. Imagine an individual, making $50,000 a year, having to file 10, 20, or even 50 W–2s. It is ridiculous, and it is unacceptable.

Madam Speaker, I am an ardent defender of the United States Constitution—in particular, the 10th Amendment, which deleges authority not granted to the Federal Government, to the States.

That said, the Constitution gives plenary jurisdiction to Congress relative to the regulation of interstate commerce, under Article I, section 8. It is, therefore, as in this case, the constitutional responsibility of Congress to identify and respond to an increasingly mobile and global economy and relieve it of unnecessary burdensome compliance requirements resulting from a patchwork of unique State income tax laws.

And that is why many groups that advocate on behalf of States, such as the American Legislative Exchange Council, agree with this legislation, because H.R. 1393 is the type of simple and streamlined interstate commerce regulation Congress should be enacting. In fact, there are more than 300 outside organizations that have encouraged support of this bill.

With the help of my colleague, HANK JOHNSON, on the other side of the aisle, our Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act is a carefully crafted, bipartisan, and bicameral measure to streamline State income tax laws across the Nation.

It creates a uniform threshold, giving nonprofits 30 days to work in another State without being liable for that State’s income tax. This simple and straightforward language ensures employers and employees with a clear understanding of their tax liability, and it gives employers a clear and consistent rule so that they can plan and accurately predict their tax liability, knowing the same rule applies for all States with an income tax.

It also means much less paperwork and reduced compliance costs for both States and businesses and their employees.

The goal of H.R. 1393 is to protect our mobile workers, and that includes traveling emergency workers and first responders; trade union workers; non-profit staff; teachers; Federal, State, and local government employees; and more. That is why it affects employees who cross State lines for temporary periods will benefit from this law.

I would also note that great care was taken with this bill to diminish the impact on State revenues. You heard testimony earlier relative to its impact on State governments. In fact, a 2015 study by Ernst & Young found that H.R. 1393 would actually raise State income tax revenues, while other States would only see a de minimis change.

With that said, I would like to take this time to thank all of the members of the Mobile Workforce Coalition who support our bill; Chairman GOODLATTE and his world class staff for all of their hard work; and those who cosponsored this in the House; as well as Senator THUNE, Senator BROWN, and nearly half of the United States Senate who have cosponsored our companion bill.

Madam Speaker, as Congress continues to work on comprehensive tax reform to jump start our economy and to provide relief for American families and businesses, the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act is a great start to streamline the Tax Code and roll back unnecessary and costly administrative burdens.

With so much red tape interwoven today’s Tax Code, this bill is a commonsense way to cut through the clutter and simplify part of the filing process, so that we can make our workforce the priority and help our small businesses grow and prosper.

Madam Speaker, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 1393. Mr. NADLER, Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman NADLER for yielding.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1393, the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017, is an important, bipartisan bill that will help workers and small businesses across the country—large businesses, also.

As the proud sponsor of this legislation in both the 110th and 111th Congresses, I am very familiar with how hard legislators on both sides of the aisle have worked since then to bring this bill to this point. I want to thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Congressman Bob Goodlatte, for ushering this bill to the House to this point, and I ask my colleagues to please vote in favor of this legislation.

H.R. 1393 would provide for a uniform and easily administrable law that will simplify the patchwork of existing inconsistent and confusing State rules. It would also reduce administrative costs to the States and lessen compliance burdens on employers.

Take my home State of Georgia as an example. If an Atlanta-based employee of a St. Louis company travels to headquarters on a business trip once a year, that employee would be subject to Missouri tax, even if the annual visit only lasts for a day. However, if that employee travels to Maine, her trip would only be subject to tax if her trip lasts for 10 days. If she travels to New Mexico on business, she would only be subject to tax if she was in the State for 15 days.

Acuity Brands is a leading Georgia-based lighting manufacturer that employs over 1,000 associates and has over 3,200 associates nationwide who travel extensively across the country for training, conferences, and other businesses.

In a letter in support of a prior, nearly identical version of this bill, Richard Reece, Acuity’s executive vice president, writes that current State laws are numerous, varied, and often changing, requiring that the company expend significant resources merely interpreting and satisfying States’ requirements.

He concludes that “unified, clear rules and definitions for nonemployee reporting and withholding obligations would undoubtedly improve compliance rates, and it would strike the correct balance between State sovereignty and ensuring that America’s modern mobile workforce is not unduly encumbered.”

We should heed the concerns of Acuity, and numerous other businesses across the country, by enacting H.R. 1393 into law.

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

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. With over 57 cosponsors during this Congress, it is clear that the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017 is an idea whose time has come.

I thank my colleagues for their work on this bill and, in particular, Congressman BISHOP, for his leadership on this bill in the 115th Congress, who has carried the torch for our esteemed former colleague, the late Howard Coble, who passed this bill out of the House in the 112th Congress.

I also thank our staffs, who have worked tirelessly to build support for this legislation along bipartisan lines.

This bill is a testament to the good that can come from working across the aisle on bipartisan tax fairness reforms. I am optimistic that the passage of H.R. 1393 augurs well for the passage of re-fairness legislation, which is critical to countless small businesses across the country, during this Congress.
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to bring this bill up for a vote soon. This country’s employees and businesses deserve quick action.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I am the only speaker remaining and prepared to close, so I reserve the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 12 minutes remaining.

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

I want to quote from a letter from the president of the Federation of Tax Administrators and commissioner of the Oklahoma Tax Commission regarding this bill. She writes:

This bill breaches the core of the relationship between the Federal Government and State Governors and, I think, fundamentally important to the voters of Virginia and of Michigan. It is a clear example of the Federal Government crossing a line that I think should not be crossed by the Federal Government. It opens up opportunities for the mobile workforce.

Here are the three most compelling facts:

One, States have in place a combination of rules, laws, and compliance standards that effectively eliminate an unfair outcome when it comes to recordkeeping and taxation of wages earned in a State by a nonresident; Two, these approaches, which include model legislation developed by the Multistate Tax Commission, take into account the fact that it is available to employers and de minimis activities; and Three, the H.R. 1393 goes beyond what is necessary to ensure fair outcomes and a reasonable approach in particular, because the bill takes away the states’ rights to require proper wage reporting and withholding even when the employer already has the information to easily do so. It opens up opportunities for tax avoidance.

In closing, let me note that this legislation would not just harm New York and not just to a de minimis amount—$100 million to $120 million is hardly de minimis—but it would also have a similar effect on other States. That is why this bill is opposed by a broad coalition of labor and tax organizations, including the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, SEIU, the International Union of Police Associations, Federation of Tax Administrators, and the Multistate Tax Commission, and many others.

Whether or not your State is hurt financially by this bill, however, all Members should be concerned by legislation that so brazenly strips from a State one of the fundamental hallmarks of sovereignty: the ability to tax economic activity that occurs entirely within its own borders. If we can target New York and other States with this bill, what is to say we won’t come after your State next?

I must also add that this bill is one in a series of bills that we have seen over the last few years that chip away at the revenue-raising and taxing ability of the States. Especially as the current majority and the current President seek to shift more responsibilities to the States and away from the Federal Government, we should not be depriving the States of their ability to raise revenue as they see fit within their own sovereignty.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this misguided bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

This bill enjoys broad bipartisan support. It has 57 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle. This bill will minimize compliance burdens on both workers and employers so they can get back to being productive and performing jobs. We have received letters of support from hundreds of entities across the employment spectrum.

But this bill is not just about business; it is about individuals. One businessman told the Judiciary Committee that the compliance burdens from the patchwork of State laws falls on his employees, who make less than $50,000 per year and have limited resources to seek professional advice.

It has been questioned whether there will be revenue lost to the States. Analysis shows the impact is minimal, affecting mainly the allocation of revenues, not the overall size of the tax revenue pot.

Similarly, concerns about tax evasion are unfounded. Unlike the general income tax context, there is little motive here for fraud or gaming.

The amount of money at issue, taxes on less than 30 days’ wages, is minimal. More importantly, except in nine States, the employee will have to pay the tax, in any event, to the employee’s home State, so the only savings would be from minor rate differentials between the two jurisdictions.

This legislation is a great example of Congress working in a bipartisan way to relieve burdens on hardworking Americans.

I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Bishop) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Johnson) for their bipartisan work on this legislation. I urge all of our colleagues to support the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of a common sense bill, H.R. 1393 that would set a national standard of 30 days for states to subject non-residents to income tax requirements within that state.

Under current law, many of the 41 states with a broad based personal income tax rate subject out of state residents to income tax in that state on the first day they “work” in the state.

This patchwork of state laws have created a confusing and unworkable nationwide system where individuals who travel to another state for a conference or meeting can find themselves subject to income tax requirements in a state where they only spent a few days.

In fact, these overburdensome requirements can create a scenario in which a company of 7,000 employees who travel for domestic business may have to file 10,500 W-2’s over the course of a given year. This burden can be even worse for a small business.

One small business, which operates several customer service centers throughout the United States and has 600 employees working in 46 states, faces a significant burden trying to comply. Most of these 600 employees work out of one of the customer service centers, but 12 employees travel out of state to do a job occasionally. The manager of this company has to spend 3 plus hours every week figuring out the tax reporting requirements for these employees, even though most of them only pay $30 to $100 a year into these different taxing authorities.

Is this really a good use of the time of a small business? Wouldn’t we rather have individuals working and grow our economy then waste time complying with the burdensome reporting requirements for 42 different taxing authorities?

H.R. 1393 is a common sense solution to this problem. 30 days is a fair baseline standard that can be applied nationwide. It allows U.S. workers to travel and work around the country for a reasonable amount of time without subjecting them to reporting requirements for taxation in all of the jurisdictions in which they travel. If they stay longer than 30 days in any particular State then the state is free to tax them according to their own state laws.

With this new standard, American business will know what the rules of the road are across the country and they can plan their business accordingly.

I thank the Chairman for moving this important bill through the committee, and urge your support.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 1393, the “Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017.”

I agree with the bill’s sponsors that a uniform framework specifying when an employer must withhold state income tax could help ensure simplicity and be more administrable than the current varied state standards. However the means by which H.R. 1393 achieves this result would lead to significant state revenue losses and could actually encourage income tax avoidance.

To begin with, rather than promoting uniformity, H.R. 1393 would have a significant adverse impact on income tax revenues for certain states.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, for example, New York could lose between $55 million and $120 million annually if this measure was signed into law.

Other states that would be adversely impacted include Illinois, Massachusetts, and California.

And, as a result of the lost revenues from non-resident taxpayers, these states could be forced to make up their losses by shifting the tax burden to resident taxpayers or levying new taxes.

And states may even have to cut governmental services, such as funding for education and critical infrastructure improvements.
Another problem with H.R. 1393 is that it essentially provides a roadmap for state income tax liability avoidance. By allowing an employer to rely on the employee’s determination of the time he or she is expected to spend working in another state during the year, the bill prevents the employer from withholding an employee’s state income taxes to a non-resident state. This would be the result even if the employee knows that he has been working in a state more than 30 days, as long as that state cannot prove that the employee committed fraud in making his annual determination and that the employer knew it.

Rather than proceeding with this flawed bill, the House should be considering a fair and uniform framework to allow states to collect taxes owed on remote sales.

By staying silent since the Supreme Court’s 1992 Quill decision, Congress has failed to ensure that states have the authority to collect the sales and use tax on Internet purchases. Placing brick and mortar businesses at a competitive disadvantage hurts main street Americans and means fewer local jobs and fewer opportunities.

Lost tax revenues mean that state and local governments will have fewer resources to provide for residents’ essential services, such as education and police and fire protection.

We owe it to our local communities, our state retailers, and state and local governments to act this Congress.

I am disappointed that rather than moving the bipartisan fairness legislation that our communities need, we are considering H.R. 1393 instead.

Accordingly, I oppose H.R. 1393.

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Mr. COLLINS of Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1393.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

**IMPROVING SERVICES FOR OLDER YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE ACT**

**Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2847) to make improvements to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and related provisions.**

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

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

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act.”

**SEC. 2. IMPROVINGS TO THE JOHN H. CHAFE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM AND RELATED PROVISIONS.**

(a) **AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE FORMER FOSTER YOUTH UP TO AGE 21.—**Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677) is amended—

(1) by striking “subsection (d)(3)(A)(ii)” and inserting “(or 23 years of age, if the Secretary determines that the State agency responsible for administering the State plans under this part and part B uses any other funds not provided under this part to provide services and assistance for youths who have aged out of foster care that are comparable to the services and assistance the youths would receive if the State had made such an election, the certification required under clause (1) may provide that the State will provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 23 years of age”; and

(2) in subsection (b)(3)(B), by striking “children who have left foster care and all that follows through the period and inserting “youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 21 years of age”;

(c) **EXPANDING AND CLARIFYING THE USE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS.—**

(1) **IN GENERAL.—**Section 477(i)(3) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)(3)) is amended—

(A) by striking “on the date” and all that follows through “26”; and

(B) by inserting “, but in no event may a youth participate in the program for more than 5 years (whether or not consecutive)” before the period.

(2) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—**Section 477(i)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)(1)) is amended by inserting “and have attained 14 years of age” before the period.

(d) **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.—**Section 477 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677), as amended by subsections (a), (b), and (c) of this section, is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking “INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM” and inserting “PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD”; and

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficient living services and insert “support all youth who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older in their transition to adulthood through transitional services”;

(B) by striking “and post-secondary education” after “high school diploma”; and

(C) by striking “training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills” and inserting “training and opportunities to practice daily living skills (such as financial literacy training and driving instruction)”;

(D) in paragraph (2), by striking “who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment” and inserting “who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older achieve meaningful, permanent connections with a caring adult”; and

(E) in paragraph (3), by striking “who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions” and inserting “who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities, positive youth development, and experiential learning that reflects what their peers in intact families experience”; and

(F) by striking paragraph (4) and redesigning paragraphs (5) through (8) as paragraphs (4) through (7); and

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(D), by striking “adolescents” and inserting “youth”;

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking “youth” and inserting “youth development” after “to provide training”; and

(ii) (B) by striking “adolescents preparing for independent living” and all that follows through and inserting “youth preparing for a successful transition to adulthood and making a permanent connection with a caring adult”;

(iii) in subparagraph (H), by striking “adolescents” and inserting “youth”;

(iv) in subparagraph (K)—

(A) by striking “adolescent” and inserting “youth”; and

(B) by striking “the adolescent” each place it appears and inserting “the youth”; and
(4) in subsection (f), by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

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(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the National Youth in Transition Database and any other data from States' Incidence and Trends in Foster Care database that are included in such report. The report shall include the following:

''(A) A description of the reasons for entry into foster care and of the foster care experiences of children of other ages who exit from foster care before attaining age 17.

''(B) A description of the characteristics of the individuals who report poor outcomes at ages 19 and 21 to the National Youth in Transition Database.

''(C) Benchmarks for determining what constitutes a poor outcome for youth who remain in or have exited from foster care and plans that each branch will take to incorporate these benchmarks in efforts to evaluate child welfare agency performance in providing services to children transitioning from foster care.

''(D) An analysis of the association between types of placement, number of overall placements, time spent in foster care, and other factors, and outcomes at ages 19 and 21.

''(E) An analysis of the differences in outcomes for children in and formerly in foster care that exist among States.

(e) CLARIFYING DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED TO YOUTH LEAVING FOSTER CARE.—Section 415(f)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 675(f)(1)) is amended by inserting after “REAL ID Act of 2005” the following: “; and any official documentation necessary to prove that the child was previously in foster care”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2847.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to support the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act.

In fiscal year 2015, almost 21,000 youth aged out of foster care, meaning they left foster care without a permanent family connection. Many of them are often poorly prepared for adulthood and lack some of the basic skills they need to be successful adults.

Last year, the House passed the Family First Prevention Services Act, a bill that would improve the lives of children and families by making sure more children can stay safely at home and not enter foster care in the first place, helping to make sure fewer children end up in foster care. I also updated the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program to allow States to assist older foster youth up to the age of 23, including providing education and training vouchers, to help them get out of foster care and have a better future. Unfortunately, it did not pass the Senate, so it never became law.

I am glad my good friend, Mr. PASO, introduced the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act to highlight the needs of these older youth, and I know many will benefit from the changes made by his bill.

Specifically, this bill would support older youth leaving foster care by allowing for In Kin Placement, Housing, and Education Summer Bridge, and Independent Living Support Program to support older youth leaving care. It would also allow HHS to redistribute unspent funds if a State has money remaining at the end of the fiscal year. Older youth can be helped with existing resources. And through this bill, we will also be able to learn more about youth leaving foster care and their outcomes, which will help us develop better policies in the years ahead.

I am grateful for the opportunity we have today to support this bill. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, which would help to ensure that all the children in our care are provided for foster youth will indeed be utilized and make sure they are used to help them in the furtherance of their education and becoming independent.

My colleague, KAREN BASS, who visited me just a few weeks ago, has been a leader on this legislation and on foster youth issues for a number of years, and ask my colleagues to support our bipartisan collaboration that is involved.

In addition to Congresswoman BASS’ leadership on this bill to help foster youth, let me also recognize my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee who are providing great leadership on these very issues—Mr. DAVIS, Ms. CHU, and Ms. SEWELL—for their work on behalf of foster children as reflected in these bills that they have co-authored and that we are considering today.

I urge our colleagues to support this bill and the other bipartisan child welfare improvements being considered today and to work with us to even do more to help foster youth succeed.

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

There was no objection.
Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding.

I strongly support H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act. This bill would expand eligibility for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program services and education for older foster youth, and ensure that all funds and education vouchers are used. I want to commend my colleague, Representative Bass, for her longstanding leadership on this bill.

As has been indicated by the ranking member, this important bill, and the other child welfare bills we will consider today, come from the Families First Prevention Services Act. The Families First Prevention Services Act begins a fundamental shift in Federal child welfare policy to preserving families and the family-like structures when children are removed. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that we enact the larger bill with these important child welfare provisions and as we consider the other bills separately today.

I would like to note that there are, indeed, five child welfare bills on the floor this afternoon, which is a real testament to the leadership of Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal. So I commend both of them for their leadership in these Ways and Means Committee together to the extent that we can have five bills that have been researched, that have been debated; levels of agreement have been reached.

I strongly support the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. FRANKS, my good friend. Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I also want to sincerely thank Chairman KEVIN BRADY and the members of the Ways and Means Committee for their continued and invaluable work to protect America’s children and strengthening our child welfare policy, as is in evidence in these five bills we are considering today.

Mr. Speaker, foster care issues rarely drive our headlines. Yet, to the children who are in the child welfare system, the importance of finding solutions and eliminating the barriers that would ensure better futures, better outcomes, and a permanent connection to a loving family can make fundamental, lifelong differences to those who are some of America’s most vulnerable children.

The goal of the Family First legislation, of which these bills are components, is to respond to the devastating data pertaining to the outcomes for foster youth who age out of care, often without any permanent connection and without the life skills and support systems necessary to thrive as independent adults.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard so many times from the States that there is a need to make our Federal child welfare funding flexible enough so that we incentivize the placement of children into foster care who would safely receive care in their homes or with safe, loving relatives. This bipartisan package of child welfare system improvements makes important steps toward improving our child welfare system to better protect and support our children and their families, and I am certainly delighted to support its passage.

I want to thank, Mr. Speaker, again, those colleagues that have worked on this for their invaluable work on this critically important legislation.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL). Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member Davis for yielding.

I want to give a big thanks to my friend and colleague, Representative KAREN BASS of California. She is a true champion for our foster youth. I was happy to participate in her Foster Youth Shadow Day last month, which gave me the opportunity to meet with a constituent of mine that directly benefits from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. I strongly urge all of my colleagues to host a foster youth shadow day next year.

I also want to voice my strong support for Representative Bass’ bill, H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act. The current Chafee Foster Care Independence Program plays an important role in our larger foster care system, and the services it provides should be extended to cover older youth up to the age of 23.

I was able to hear firsthand from my foster youth shadow, Khadejah Moore, about the struggle youth face when they age out of the system. These young adults are thrown into the real world with little to no support system. It is an incredibly frightening time for these young youth. Yet if we can extend the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and also allow youth more time to use education vouchers, they have a better chance of having the opportunity to graduate college and successfully enter the workforce.

This is an important, commonsense bill, and I want to thank both Representative Bass and Representative Faso for introducing this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2847.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, having no other speakers, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Ms. Judy Chu). Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2847, the bill offered by my friend.
and colleague, KAREN BASS, a tireless leader on foster youth and child welfare. I recently hosted an amazing young woman named Ruth during Foster Youth Shadow Day here on the Hill. The message Ruth wanted lawmakers to hear was that every day as a 19-year-old have not suddenly stopped now that she has aged out of foster care. Ruth has a resilient spirit and unstoppable determination, but she should not be left out in the cold as she pursues her education and her goal of helping other foster youth in the future.

The Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act will help people like Ruth by making vital changes to the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, an important source of funding for foster youth. Currently, foster youth are only eligible for Chafee services if they are between the ages of 16 and 21. This bill expands the services provided by the program to include youth between the ages of 14 and 23. This is such a crucial change to the program since foster youth like Ruth face so many daunting challenges during the period of young adulthood as they transition toward independence and self-sufficiency. Providing essential services such as access to older mentors and role models, connections to employment opportunities and education vouchers for foster youth after they reach the age of 18 are key sources of support for foster youth. This bill helps ensure that foster youth have the resources needed to become healthy, thriving adults.

Thanks again to Representative Bass for her work on this bill.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. Bass), the sponsor of this bill.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my legislation, in conjunction with Representative Faso, to support the education and advancement of foster youth. I want to thank the Representative for his leadership on this issue. I also want to thank Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal for their leadership on behalf of the Nation’s foster youth.

I do think it is very remarkable, as several other speakers have said, that today we are bringing forward five bipartisan bills to improve the Nation’s foster care system. Each one of these bills addresses a serious challenge or gap in that system.

H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, allows States to expand the Chafee Grant Program to foster youth up to the age of 23. Currently, the program ends at 21. The Chafee Grant Program provides educational grants and other services to help young people transition into adulthood and become independent.

In May, as part of National Foster Youth Shadow Day that is organized by the National Foster Youth Institute, I had the opportunity to meet a young woman named Doniesha Thomas. Doniesha is from Los Angeles, and spent 20 years in foster care before she aged out. She described her foster home as abusive, and eventually she had to move several times. Against tremendous odds, Doniesha has continued to persevere and is currently a college student at Los Angeles Trade Technical College. She has been able to do this thanks to the administration of justice and minor in paralegal studies.

Doniesha is just one of a small number of foster youth who actually make it to college. This is despite nearly 70 percent of foster youth expressing a desire to attend college. Those, like Doniesha, who are accepted and attend college face another hurdle, which is graduating. Currently, only 3 percent of foster youth who attend college graduate. These programs are designed to help foster youth advance in college, trade school, and employment.

During National Foster Youth Shadow Day, I had the opportunity to speak to many other young people, and several told me of the challenges that they face after—well, if they were lucky to graduate high school, where they attend college and then something happens; either they run out of resources or their housing falls through and then they have to leave college, so their college is interrupted.

That is why this legislation is important, because it allows for the flexibility; if the young person is not able to complete college in 4 years, they do have a couple of other years.

One of the things that many people don’t realize is that when young people age out of the foster youth system—which typically is at 18, sometimes is at 21, depending on the State—that put young people on the street. They are 18 years old. They are in their foster home. They are given a bag, typically a large-sized trash bag, with all of their belongings, and they are put out on the street left to fend for themselves. With today’s economic challenges, there are no 18-year-olds that can fend for themselves without a safety net.

If we think of middle class children, transitioning into adulthood is typically easier. They go to college and they have housing. But if they have any challenges, they can always call home. They can text their parents. Their parents are there to rescue them in case they run out of money or something happens with their housing or their grades.

If we think of a young person out of the child welfare system who is literally put on the streets at the age of 18, you can only imagine what happens; which is why so many children in the foster care system transition without the assistance they need. Many young girls wind up trafficked; and we did legislation on that a few weeks ago.

So if we want to stop what happens on the other end, with many young children winding up incarcerated, or early pregnancies, or other challenges, we need to make sure that we provide support for them early on.

H.R. 2847 will allow the flexibility for a student, again, who might need more time to complete their education. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, to give foster youth the same type of flexibility and support that we provide our own children.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

H.R. 2847 would provide important assistance for youth aging out of foster care. In my State of Illinois, 22 percent of the more than 16,000 children placed in foster care in 2015 are aging out. Illinois is widely regarded as a leader among States when it comes to foster youth aging out of care, if we look at the legislation it is, indeed, one of the first jurisdictions in which young people who are in foster care on their 18th birthday were able to remain in beyond the age of 18.

Research conducted by the University of Chicago found that allowing foster youth to remain in care beyond the age of 18 is associated with an increase in child well-being, including postsecondary educational attainment. Specifically, former foster youth from Illinois are twice as likely to have ever attended college, and more than twice as likely to have completed at least 1 year of college by age 21, compared with foster youth in other States that have not been given the option to stay in care beyond 18 years of age.

Due to school mobility issues experienced in high school, over 38 percent of foster youth graduate from high school by age 19, which makes it unlikely that they would be graduated from college by age 21.

Extending access to Chafee Independence Act programs to age 23 rather than cutting these young people off at age 21 would ensure these youth are able to be supported beyond their first year of college. We know that when students lose access to critical financial aid resources such as the education assistance training voucher in the middle of their college journey, it forces them to drop out of college in search of employment.

Last Saturday, I spent 2 hours with a group of young people who had been organized by a young fellow, Kenneth Bennett’s son. His name is Taylor Bennett. Taylor is the younger brother of Chance the Rapper. He is 21 years of age and had organized young people who were transgender, who were homeless, who were out of school, who were incarcerated. Therefore, they were pleased to know that we were going to be considering this legislation today, which I strongly support.
I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I want to thank Mr. Faso and Mr. Reed from New York and Ms. Bass from California for introducing this important bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote “yes.”

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2847.

The question was taken. The yeas and nays were ordered. There were no yeas and nays. The Speaker pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REQUIRING UNNECESSARY BARRIERS FOR RELATIVE FOSTER PARENTS ACT

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2846) to review and improve licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home, as amended.

The Speaker pro tempore. The yeas and nays were ordered. There were no yeas and nays. The Speaker pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

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 “Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act”.

SEC. 2. REVIEWING AND IMPROVING LICENSING STANDARDS FOR PLACEMENT IN A RELATIVE FOSTER FAMILY HOME.

(a) IDENTIFICATION OF REPUTABLE MODEL LICENSING STANDARDS.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall identify reputable model licensing standards with respect to the licensing of foster family homes (as defined in section 472(c)(1) of the Social Security Act).

(b) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.—Section 422(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 622(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (18), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (19), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(Z) whether the State has elected to waive standards established in 471(a)(10)(A) for relative foster family homes (pursuant to waiver authority provided by 471(a)(10)(D)), a description of which standards the State most commonly waives, and if the State has not elected to waive the standards, the reason for not waiving these standards;

“(C) if the State has elected to waive standards specified in subparagraph (B), how caseworkers are trained to waive these standards and whether the State has developed a process or provided tools to assist caseworkers in waiving nonsafety standards pursuant to the authority provided in 471(a)(10)(D) to quickly place children with relatives; and

“(D) a description of the steps the State is taking to improve caseworker training or the process, if any.”

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subject to subsection (b), the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) TRANSITION RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a State plan under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires State legislation (other than legislation appropriating funds) in order for the plan to meet the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act, the State plan shall not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirements of such part solely on the basis of the failure of the plan to meet such additional requirements before the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the close of the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of enactment of this Act. For purposes of the previous sentence, in the case of a State that has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session shall be deemed to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.

(2) APPLICATION TO PROGRAMS OPERATED BY INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—In the case of an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires time to take action necessary to comply with the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act (whether the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium has a plan entered into with a State, a State plan entered into with a State), the Secretary shall provide the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium with such additional time as the Secretary determines is necessary for the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium to take the action to comply with the additional requirements before being regarded as failing to comply with the requirements.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) each will control 15 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials of H.R. 2846, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on H.R. 2866, the Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act, introduced by my friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER).

Introducing this legislation, Congressman SMUCKER was joined by our Whip, Ms. SCHWARTZ, and me. Congresswoman TERRI SEEWELL from across the aisle. The bill has strong bipartisan support, including mine. I am a co-sponsor. And the Child Welfare League of America has strongly endorsed this legislation.

So what does this bill do? Well, in short, the bill will reduce the bureaucratic process for placing children in foster care with relatives, when possible, and is in the best interest of the child.

Now, this just makes common sense. Last year alone, there were almost a half million children in foster care, more than 16,000 children in my home State of Pennsylvania. Now, there are countless family members of these foster children who are not only willing, but they are ready to have these children placed in their homes when one of their relatives can’t take care of them.

As a matter of good public policy, we should be making the placement process much easier for family members, not more difficult, because it is often in the best interest of the child.

Studies show that placing foster children with relatives solves many of the problems children face when being placed into foster care; moreover, it improves the outcomes for these children. Children are more likely to succeed when they can stay with a family member of their own and someone they are already familiar with and know. Children placed with relatives tend to spend less time in foster care and also experience much more stability.

The problem is that, while current law allows States to waive certain licensing standards when placing children with relatives, many States have been slow to implement the law. One of the purported reasons is that caseworkers are slow or they simply don’t know how to place children with relatives because of a lack of training on their part.

Today, caseworkers may not be adequately trained regarding their ability to waive certain standards when licensing relatives. This has resulted in delays in placing children with relatives.

And when these children are already facing a tremendous amount of turmoil and uncertainty in their lives, we shouldn’t be tying them up in bureaucratic red tape. We need to do more to place these children with a loving family member whenever possible.

Now, how do we do that? Well, Representative SMUCKER’s bill, H.R. 2866, will help remedy this problem by making our foster care system more family
Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for the work that he has done in regards to foster care issues over the years.

Every child, Mr. Speaker, deserves a loving home; but when a child’s home is no longer safe because of abuse, neglect, or behavioral issues, children are placed in foster homes. In fact, in 2015, more than 670,000 American children–16,000 in Pennsylvania, the State, including in my district, more than 16,000 there have spent time in foster care.

Countless families across the country are willing and eager to accept foster children into their homes, and research shows that placement with relatives is better for the child. Therefore, Federal policy should make it easier for foster children to be placed with family members.

Our bill is being considered today on the floor, and again, I ask for my colleagues’ support. When it comes to finding loving homes for children, this is a bipartisan issue. There are no Republicans or Democrats, just mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, and sons and daughters. Each child should have a bed to be tucked into at night in a loving home.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also note that the following organizations have expressed support for H.R. 2866: the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Child Welfare League of America, First Focus, March of Dimes, and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners.

Again, I thank Representative SEWELL from Alabama for her work on foster care issues and for her leadership on this bill. We really appreciate her work.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I strongly support H.R. 2866, the Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act. This important bill helps relative caregivers by requiring States to examine whether their licensing standards align with the best practices in licensing family foster homes. In so doing, H.R. 2866 requires States to set reasonable requirements for family homes, standards that consider community norms and cultural differences and standards that remove artificial barriers to family care.

I have advocated these provisions within my own bill to improve support for kinship caregivers, and I am proud to support Congresswoman SEWELL and Congressman SMUCKER’s bill.

More than 25 percent of children in care live with a grandparent or other relative. My congressional district has the highest percentage of children living with grandparent caregivers in the Nation, followed closely by two other congressional districts in Illinois. In 2015, more than 670,000 children placed in out-of-home care are placed with relatives; however, less than half of these children are placed with relatives in homes that are licensed.

The vast majority of relative caregivers are not able to become licensed caregivers because the standards do not make sense with their circumstances, such as requiring a grandmother in an expensive city like Chicago to have one bedroom for each of her three grandbabies or requiring her to take dozens of hours of parent training each year.

In 2008, I worked with Congressman Jerry Weller from Illinois to allow States the ability to waive nonsafety licensing standards on a case-by-case basis to help kinship caregivers via the Fostering Connections Act. Unfortunately, many States chose not to exercise this waiver authority to assist kin caregivers.

For example, in 2011, although Illinois had more than 3,600 nonlicensed relatives caring for youth, only 72 licensing waivers for relatives were approved. Less than 2 percent received waivers.

H.R. 2866 requires States to modernize their licensing standards to align with the best practices in licensing. This is a commonsense and important change.

Further, this bill advances our goal of ensuring that States follow the waivers to meet the best interests of the children. To understand the use of waivers, Children’s Bureau should collect data on States’ granting waivers for nonsafety licensing standards for relatives, including the number of relatives applying for waivers, the number of waivers issued or denied, and the reason for denial.

I strongly support H.R. 2866, the Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act and urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) who is a sponsor of this bill.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member Davis for yielding me the time.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER) who is joining me in introducing this bill. I want to
thank him for his leadership on foster care and foster youth and again say thank you for looking for what is in the best interests of the most vulnerable children in our society.

H.R. 2866 has been supported by not only me but everyone here in the House but has the support of many foster care advocacy groups, including Generations United, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Mr. Speaker, when we need to do everything in our power to make the foster care system family friendly, and H.R. 2866 takes an important step in that direction. By motivating States to update the foster care licensing regulations, we can reduce red tape and make it easier for family members to become foster parents.

Research conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services, academicians, and advocates show that children experience better outcomes when they are in the care of family members compared to children in nonrelative care.

When kids are placed with a relative like a grandmother, they experience fewer school changes, are less likely to reenter the foster care system, and are more likely to be adopted. Moreover, data shows that foster youth experience better behavioral and mental health outcomes, are more likely to report that they "feel loved," and are more likely to stay connected with their communities.

I want to again thank Representative Smucker from Pennsylvania for his leadership and sponsorship of this bill with me, as well as my Democrat and Republican colleagues on the House Ways and Means Committee for unanimously supporting this legislation.

I am encouraged to see that this body values our foster youth, and I hope we can continue to keep up the spirit of bipartisanship.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Ms. Bass).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2866, and I want to congratulate my good friends, Representatives SEWELL, KELLY, and SMUCKER for this legislation to reduce barriers for relative caregivers.

Ironically, in the 1990s, when the crack cocaine epidemic hit, that was the first time that women started using drugs equal to men. It hadn’t happened before, and so families fell apart. One of the things that happened, in the early 1990s, was in the middle of the night a grandmother might be called and three grandchildren delivered to her by Children’s Protective Services. The grandmother would take the children, without any support and without any knowledge of how to deal with the trauma that the children faced.

During those years, we actually discriminated against relatives. We said very negative things about them such as: the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree; and, if your daughter wound up on drugs, why should we give the children to you?

So during those years, we would rather pay a stranger—and there can be wonderful foster parents—but a stranger to take care of children instead of families.

One of the things we did in Los Angeles was we organized the grandmothers, and we trained them how to go before the board of supervisors and advocate on their own behalf. That happened all around the country. So there really was a movement of relatives who rose up and said: We want our children; we just need help. We might be on a fixed income, and we can’t really support the children.

It is actually more expensive to put a child in foster care. So there began a national movement for relative caregivers to fighting for their rights and for services. So over the years, we really evolved to the point where we have legislation like this where we recognize the benefit of having relatives take care of children.

Ironically, the last piece of legislation we were talking about was about children aging out of the system. Before we prioritized relatives, what would happen is a young child who was aging out of foster care, we would put them on the street, and the first thing they would do would be to go look for their families because they might have family somewhere, and they would often do that.

This legislation, I think, is extremely important to allow flexibility for licensing of relative caregivers. Examples of grandmothers who I worked with directly who wanted to take in their grandchildren but they were told they didn’t have enough bedrooms in the house to put them in. We would go to the child welfare agency, and they would ask: We want our children; we just need help. We might be on a fixed income, and we can’t really support the children.

This legislation, I think, is extremely important to allow flexibility for licensing of relative caregivers. Examples of grandmothers who I worked with directly who wanted to take in their grandchildren but they were told they didn’t have enough bedrooms in the house to put the children in more expensive foster care and break them up and send them to different foster homes instead of leaving them with the grandmother or assist her in moving.

So legislation like H.R. 2866, I believe, will begin to address some of these challenges and do what every child needs, which is to be in a loving home with family.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

H.R. 2866 is important because it supports kinship caregivers. Research shows that children placed in kinship care are safer, more stable placements and are more likely to be connected with their siblings and community than children placed in nonrelative placements.

In addition to these positive outcomes for children in relative care, research shows that kinship care placements are more cost effective. In Illinois, cost studies estimated an average of $1,778 in savings of title IV-E administrative expenses over an 8-year period compared to a match control group that did not have this option.

More than 50% of children who make up our Nation’s foster care population with more than one in four of these vulnerable children living with a grandparent or other relative. We should do as much as we can to strengthen these families and children. H.R. 2866 takes an important step forward.

Mr. Speaker, I have two facilities in my congressional district that have outstanding programs. They are 45-unit buildings that have been constructed for grandparents raising grandchildren. One is operated by the Sankofa Safe Child Initiative, the other by the Coppin AME Church Community Development Agency. Both of these are tremendous examples of what can happen when children have the opportunity to be nurtured by grandparents.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation. I urge its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMUCKER of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a minute because I think today is one of those days where the American people look to the people’s House and say: Isn’t it something that they can actually agree? Isn’t it something that they actually think with their hearts? Isn’t it actually something that they can come together on an issue that is so basic, so simple, and so easy to understand?

We are talking about our most precious asset and the country’s best hope for the future: our children.

As I heard Ms. SEWELL talk and Ms. BASS talk, I know in their hearts how they feel about this. I know this is not something they just thought about overnight. This is something that has been a long time in the making. This would be a good piece of legislation; they think it is good because it is good for American people.

Mr. SMUCKER joined with Ms. SEWELL to have this legislation come forward. It is a breath of fresh air for the people’s House. This is legislation that protects children, legislation that puts children with their families in case they can’t be taken care of in their own homes, and it is an incredible effort by both sides.

I want to tell you what a great privilege it is to serve with you today and to be on the floor with you. Mr. DAVIS is eloquent. Ms. BASS, Ms. SEWELL, and Mr. SMUCKER of Pennsylvania are good friends of mine. So it is good to be here today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2866, as amended.
The question was taken. The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

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

MODIFICATIONS OF CREDIT FOR PRODUCTION FROM ADVANCED NUCLEAR POWER FACILITIES

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1551) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1551

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

SECTION 1. MODIFICATIONS OF CREDIT FOR PRODUCTION FROM ADVANCED NUCLEAR POWER FACILITIES.

(a) TREATMENT OF UNUTILIZED LIMITATION AMOUNTS.—Section 45(i)(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4), by inserting “or any amendment to” after “enactment of”, and

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

“(5) ALLOCATION OF UNUTILIZED LIMITATION AMOUNTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Any unutilized national megawatt capacity limitation shall be allocated by the Secretary under paragraph (3) as rapidly as is practicable after December 31, 2020—

(i) first to facilities placed in service on or before such date to the extent that such facilities did not receive an allocation equal to their full nameplate capacity, and

(ii) the remainder placed in service after such date in the order in which such facilities are placed in service.

(B) UNUTILIZED NATIONAL MEGAWATT CAPACITY LIMITATION.—The term ‘unutilized national megawatt capacity limitation’ means the excess (if any) of—

(i) 5,000 megawatts, over

(ii) the aggregate amount of national megawatt capacity limitation allocated by the Secretary before January 1, 2021, reduced by any amount of such limitation which was allocated to a facility which was not placed in service before such date.

(C) COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROVISIONS.—Any unutilized national megawatt capacity limitation allocated by the Secretary pursuant to this paragraph—

(i) such allocation shall be treated for purposes of this section in the same manner as an allocation of national megawatt capacity limitation, and

(ii) subsection (d)(1)(B) shall not apply to any facility which receives such allocation.

(b) TRANSFER OF CREDIT BY CERTAIN PUBLIC ENTITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 45(j) of such Code is amended—

(A) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f), and

(B) by inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsection:

“(e) TRANSFER OF CREDIT BY CERTAIN PUBLIC ENTITIES—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If, with respect to a credit under subsection (a) for any taxable year—

(A) the taxpayer would be a qualified public entity, and

(B) such entity elects the application of this paragraph for such taxable year with respect to all (or any portion specified in such election) of such credit, the eligible project partner specified in such election (and not the qualified public entity) shall be treated as the taxpayer for purposes of this title with respect to such credit (or such portion thereof).

(2) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

(A) QUALIFIED PUBLIC ENTITY.—The term ‘qualified public entity’ has the meaning given such term in section 45J(e)(1).

(B) ELIGIBLE PROJECT PARTNER.—The term ‘eligible project partner’ means—

(i) any person responsible for, or participating in, the design or construction of the advanced nuclear power facility to which the credit under subsection (a) relates,

(ii) any person who participates in the provision of the nuclear steam supply system to the advanced nuclear power facility to which the credit under subsection (a) relates,

(iii) any person who has an ownership interest in such facility,

(iv) any person who is treated as a partner under section 6231(a) for purposes of section 6231(a) (if any) of—

(I) a qualified public entity, or

(II) any entity that is treated as a partner under section 6231(a) of—

(aa) a qualified public entity,

(bb) a tax-exempt organization described in section 501(c)(12) or section 1381(a)(2), or

(cc) a not-for-profit electric utility which has or had received a loan or loan guarantee under the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

(C) EFFECTIVE DATES.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) TRANSFER OF CREDIT BY CERTAIN PUBLIC ENTITIES.—The amendments made by subsection (b) shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. RICE) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

Mr. Speaker. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1551, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of H.R. 1551, a bill I have sponsored that modifies the advanced nuclear production tax credit.

The nuclear production tax credit has been a vital tool to jump-start a nuclear industry that has been dormant for almost 40 years. Unfortunately, due to overregulation, ambiguities in the law, and other unanticipated events, the first-in-a-generation nuclear plants that began construction because of this tax credit are in danger of being shut down midconstruction.

Without certainty that these facilities will have full access to the allocation of their tax credits, it may be anomalous for 40 years this country builds another cutting-edge nuclear facility. Thankfully, the legislation we are considering today provides these facilities the certainty they so desperately need to move forward.

Almost 12 years ago, Congress established the nuclear production tax credit. It was a program designed to ensure our energy independence. Not wanting to oversubsidize the nuclear industry, Congress set out to limit the credit in a number of ways, including a national production capacity that effectively capped the amount of this credit available.

South Carolina and Georgia responded to this incentive, making large investments in nuclear facilities that represented the pinnacle of safety and innovation in the industry. After years of applications, planning, and rigorous oversight by multiple regulatory authorities, these plants began construction in 2013, receiving sizable allocations of the nuclear production tax credit’s national capacity.

Yet, it quickly became clear changes to the underlying provision were necessary in order for these plants to fulfill the capacity allocation as Congress originally intended. For example, right now, not-for-profit entities like public utilities are unable to utilize or transfer their share of the credits, leaving the majority of the tax credits allocated to these two plants unusable.
Additionally, strict placed-in-service date rules would force these plants to make decisions between finishing before a deadline or making sure they are constructed in the safest way possible.

Recently, to make matters worse, a third-party contractor for both plants unexpectedly filed for bankruptcy, putting the projects in jeopardy of finishing before the placed-in-service date, if at all.

In the coming weeks, both plants must provide a plan for how they will continue construction. The full availability of the $2 billion in tax credits will be a key factor in the regulators’ assessment of whether to approve the plans to continue with the facilities or shut down the construction completely.

Taking a step back for a second, I think it is important to note that one of my top priorities in Congress is to help restore our country’s competitiveness through comprehensive overhaul of our Tax Code. An ideal tax system promotes parity between different energy sources and gets the government out of the business of picking winners and losers.

Before we get to that ideal tax system, we must create a smooth transition from our current system to the new system. This legislation is an important part of that transition. As Ways and Means Committee Chairman Brady said at our markup last week: “Nuclear power is a critical component of an all-of-the-above strategy for energy independence and national security.”

Without this legislation, the nuclear power industry may cease to exist as we know it today in this country, which is exactly why passing this legislation today is more important now than ever. Nuclear power is crucial to our energy independence.

Additionally, if these facilities shut down tomorrow, it will immediately cost 12,000 jobs in South Carolina and Georgia. It will cost the ratepayers hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars in increases in their annual utility bills. And most alarming, our national security will be jeopardized, as countries like China and Russia continue to make massive investments in nuclear power production.

We need to give these plants the certainty of the tax credits as Congress originally intended, not just for South Carolina and Georgia, but for the continued innovation of nuclear energy and the security of our Nation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1551, a bipartisan bill to modify the section 45J production tax credit for advanced nuclear energy.

This bill is sponsored by two of my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. BLUMENAUER from Oregon and Mr. RICE from South Carolina. It enjoys bipartisan support of members of the committee as well.

Passage of this bill is critical to thousands of jobs in South Carolina and Georgia. As you know, I am committed to passing good, bipartisan legislation that puts and keeps Americans to work.

However, I must highlight my disappointment that the committee at this moment has not acted on other important priorities in the energy tax code. It is critical that the bipartisan members of the Ways and Means Committee focus on comprehensive tax reform to continue support of the nuclear energy tax credits.

Without this legislation, the nuclear power industry is threatened. A successful civilian nuclear energy sector is needed for America’s security. It is critical to our national security interest that policies keep all aspects of the nuclear life cycle competitive with the rest of the world.

Passing this legislation now will send a clear signal to the regulatory authorities at home and nations abroad that America is serious about national security. Without such a signal, the chances that the regulatory authorities will treat the tax credits for the purposes of evaluating the project are much higher, likely leading to the authorities not approving the continued construction of the plants.

The United States must not turn over leadership in nuclear technology to Russia and China. China’s nuclear deals are with Sudan, South Africa, Kenya, Egypt, Argentina, and Great Britain.

Rosatom, which administers the former Soviet weapons complex, says it has received orders for 34 nuclear power reactors in 13 countries, including Iran. Together, Russia and China are constructing 40 advanced nuclear units, whereas the four units at the V.C. Summer and Vogtle plants would be our first nuclear units in almost 40 years.

Nuclear energy is the cornerstone of American economic and national security. I urge my colleagues to not turn the lights out on nuclear energy, and to vote in favor of H.R. 1551.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), the assistant Democratic leader and my friend.

Mr. CLYBURN. I thank my friend, Mr. NEAL, for yielding and for his support of this bill. It is very important to the States of South Carolina and Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1551 will make two critical modifications to the nuclear production tax credit program. This bill will allow governments, electric utilities and nonprofit electric cooperatives to utilize the credit, which current law restricts to for-profit utilities only. It will also remove the placed-in-service deadline for facilities to be completed.

Since the tax credit’s original passage in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, four new advanced nuclear plants, the V.C. Summer site in South Carolina, and the Vogtle site in Georgia, have been licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and are under construction.

Both projects are partly owned by state or municipal-owned utilities or nonprofit electric cooperatives. These public power entities, which have taken the first steps in constructing new advanced nuclear facilities, should not be penalized, but should, instead, be treated similarly to for-profit utilities for the purpose of these tax incentives.

The construction that is currently underway in South Carolina and Georgia employ over 12,000 skilled workers.
and represent billions of dollars of investment. When complete, they will be the largest addition of carbon-free energy in either State and will replace older fossil fuel-emitting plants.

Recently, the contractor building both the South Carolina and Georgia facilities had entered into bankruptcy proceedings, raising the possibility of further delays in the completion of these projects. It is critical that the placed-in-service deadline be extended so that these projects, the first new advanced nuclear construction projects in this country in over 30 years, may be completed.

While Russia, China, and other countries around the world are investing in nuclear energy, we cannot afford to walk away from these important sources of clean energy for future generations.

The modifications in this bill do not expand the tax credit and, as such, have little additional cost to the taxpayer. I want to thank my colleagues for the comments that have been made regarding this very important piece of legislation. We all know that securing American energy independence is absolutely critical to the future prosperity of this Nation, and nuclear power plays a major role in that mission.

At the Vogtle plant in Georgia, thousands of engineers and craftsmen, many of whom live in my district, are hard at work putting the United States at the forefront of advanced nuclear technology. The Vogtle plant and its sister plant in South Carolina, V.C. Summer, have four new, state-of-the-art reactors under construction. The clean, low-cost, safe energy that is produced from both Vogtle and V.C. Summer will pave the way for future reactors and mark a new era for nuclear power in the United States.

H.R. 1551 makes relatively small changes to already established tax credits, but this legislation will have an enormous impact on ensuring nuclear power remains a viable source of energy.

So I, again, just want to thank my good friend, Mr. Rice, for introducing this sincerely important piece of legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues here to support H.R. 1551.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to support this bill.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), my friend.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, how very appropriate it is today that this Congress is interrupting consideration of child welfare and foster care bills in order to address a gift for the nuclear industry. An indifferent Congress that refuses to put an extra dime in addressing the deficiencies of our foster care system doesn’t hesitate for a moment in giving away half a million dollars to the nuclear industry.

Isn’t it amazing to hear what we will accomplish with a mere $16 million additional tax subsidy?

Our national security will be protected. The industry has been saying compared to the harm this Congress would do if it failed to enact this bill.

Well, the devastation that faces consumers in these States has nothing to do with what Congress has or has not done, but it has to do with the nuclear industry seeking special treatment, much as it is seeking taxpayer subsidies here today.

It is an industry that has disregarded longstanding utility law to compel Georgians to pay higher electric bills for utility investments before they ever deliver one kilowatt of power. And it may, in fact, never get around to providing any power for all the money that is wasted on them.

This is a bill that is masquerading as an incentive for the future. A glorious new day for nuclear power. And yet it makes this tax credit available to 20-year-old nuclear technology and for last-century uranium mining.

This bill hardly matches its cover. It is true that $16 million of additional help to the nuclear industry is a mere footnote compared to the billions of taxpayer dollars, taxpayer resources, that have been lavished on this industry in the past.

In Georgia, the nuclear power industry literally turned decades of utility law upside down in demanding that electric ratepayers pay for what stockholders traditionally have paid for. Even after doing that, Westinghouse, a once distinguished American company, a blue ribbon company, went belly up. It has been nexus, and so have those local utility ratepayers.

As The New York Times reported recently:

"Many of the company’s injuries are self-inflicted. . . . "

"Bankruptcy will make it harder for Westinghouse and business partners to collect money they are owed by the nuclear-plant maker."

"Now, it is unclear whether the company will be able to complete any of its projects, which in the United States are about 3 years late and billions over budget."

"The cost estimates are already running $1 billion to $1.3 billion higher than originally expected, according to a recent report from Morgan Stanley, and could eventually exceed $8 billion . . . right onto the shoulders of those ratepayers in Georgia and South Carolina."

Of course, you would have thought, after the disaster at Fukushima and the many questions about nuclear power in Japan, that Congress would be rethinking nuclear power as a panacea. But even if you overlook this human disaster and the dangers to health and safety, a recognition that when the nuclear industry makes a mistake it is a mistake that lasts forever, if you just look at the economics alone, this kind of tax subsidy is unjustified.

With an ample amount of natural gas coming on the market, with so much renewable energy, nuclear simply has not made economic sense, and the history of this particular legislation demonstrates that.

When this tax break was originally set up back in 2005, there were some 32 nuclear plants that were going to take advantage of it, and it hasn’t been because of the failure of Congress that they didn’t. Out of that 32, exactly four have even begun to be built, and not one of them, not a single one of them, has been completed in over a decade and a half.

After this record of miserable failures, there is good reason to ask why taxpayers should be called on to give even more.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from 13 environmental groups expressing opposition to the legislation.

JUNE 20, 2017.

Re Opposition to H.R. 1551—amending tax credit provisions for "advanced" nuclear power.

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi: On behalf of our millions of members we are writing to register our strong opposition to H.R. 1551 that would eliminate the placed-in-service date for the nuclear production tax credit, which is currently January 1, 2021. It would also allow public power companies to receive the benefit of the federal production tax credit even though they pay no taxes.

Despite H.R. 1551’s misleading title, the production tax credit it extends is not designated solely for new, supposed “advanced” nuclear technologies. Rather, reactor designs that were approved over twenty years ago are eligible as described in the bill analysis by the Joint Committee on Taxation. “An advanced nuclear facility is any nuclear facility for the production of electricity, the reactor design for which was approved after 1993 by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.”

The nuclear industry is once again demonstrating that it is not only dirty and dangerous but that it is also not cost competitive. Despite promises that this time will be different, the House has approved API1000 nuclear reactors under construction in the U.S., two at Southern Company’s

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN AND MINORITY LEADER PELIOSI: On behalf of our millions of members we are writing to register our strong opposition to H.R. 1551 that would eliminate the placed-in-service date for the nuclear production tax credit, which is currently January 1, 2021. It would also allow public power companies to receive the benefit of the federal production tax credit even though they pay no taxes.
Plant Vogtle in Georgia and two at SCANA's V.C. Summer plant in South Carolina, have yet again shown that the nuclear industry is incapable of building new reactors within budget without significant cost overruns with federal and state financial incentives and new, streamlined federal licensing processes.

Furthermore, H.R. 1551 specifies that rural for-profit utilities, such as rural cooperatives, are major owners of the projects’ for-profit partners. Not-for-profit utilities feature a combination of both for-profit and not-for-profit utilities. Not-for-profit and tax-exempt owners of reactors to take a large portion of the tax credits by allowing non-profit, tax-exempt owners of reactors to take a large federal tax credit. State and municipal utilities and rural cooperatives are the only two U.S.-based companies actively involved in the global reactor market. The tax credits themselves will drive the commercialization of proving new technologies. When the nuclear production tax credit was created in 2005, Congress hoped to support a revival of nuclear reactor construction. Only four out of thirty-two reactors proposed since 2005 ever began construction, and the vast majority of the rest have been cancelled or indefinitely shelved.

The failures to bring any of the four reactors online within the fifteen-year period of the tax credits demonstrate that the technology is an even greater failure than the first generation of reactors, and it will be fiscally unviable to complete it. It is simply not a justified or worthy investment of taxpayers’ money to grant the owners of these reactors the extraordinary relief of billions of dollars in subsidies for projects that hold no promise for the U.S. energy sector. It should not be forgotten that Southern Company’s expansion of Plant Vogtle has already received exceptional taxpayer support through the $8.3 billion in federal nuclear loan guarantees and the public-private cost-sharing support during the permitting and licensing process.

Finally, we oppose H.R. 1551 because the legislation establishes an expensive precedent by creating brand-new tax credit value for any not-for-profit project partners that can only be transferred to all for-profit project partners. Both the Vogtle and Summer projects feature a combination of both for-profit and not-for-profit utilities. Not-for-profit utilities, such as rural cooperatives, municipal or state-owned utilities, have no federal tax liability and therefore are not provided tax credits. Under H.R. 1551, the tax credit is made available for not-for-profit entities that can only be transferred to the project’s for-profit partners. Furthermore, federal and state agencies and rural cooperatives may treat tax credit transfers as funds collected for “the sole purpose of meeting losses and expenses”—that is, as a form of debt relief, for which production tax credits were not intended. These measures amount to a brand-new, taxpayer-shooldered tax subsidy that is both Southern Company and SCANA Corp.

Furthermore, the definition of “eligible partner” allows for transfer tax credits from the not-for-profit partner(s) to the for-profit partner(s) on an unaccountable basis, and it remains unclear as to whether the tax credits will be available for a period of time after the reactors are completed. Thus, the tax credits are essentially a giveaway for both Southern Company and its shareholders. The tax credits will do nothing to promote U.S. leadership in the global nuclear industry that costs too much and poses too much danger to humans.

A viable commercial nuclear power industry is necessary to support the nation’s defense nuclear complex.” This would be a hypocrical reason to provide a subsidy to reactor redevelopers, and it would prove dangerous to peace and security domestically and globally. The U.S. is under international treaty obligations to maintain a strict separation of civilian and military applications of nuclear technology. Historically, the U.S. purpose in promoting commercial nuclear power was to encourage the peaceful application of atomic energy, not to advance nuclear weapons. As the U.S. is perceived as promoting civil nuclear power as a means of bolstering our nuclear weapons program, then it will undermine our credibility in the non-proliferation arena. It could also encourage enemies to view nuclear power plants as extensions of our military establishment, and hence as legitimate targets in armed conflict.

We strongly oppose this bill and urge you to vote against this undesired industry subsidy. We urge Congress to oppose this provision and instead focus on low- or no-carbon energy choices that can be deployed affordably in the near-term, at low risk, that will lead us to a clean and sustainable future.

Sincerely,

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is an important additional concern raised by our colleague Mr. NEAL already.

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

Mr. NEAL. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. DOGGETT. And that is the fact that there are so many other additional bipartisan efforts that are pending in our committee on energy-efficient residential property, on fuel cells, on small wind energy, on geothermal heat pumps, to mention only a few. These represent forms of energy and energy conservation that will help us address climate change while achieving our energy objectives.

Mr. Speaker, instead of today’s measures, our focus should be on safe, clean forms of energy that are utilities and not the manufacturers of an industry that costs too much and poses too much danger to humans.

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1551, legislation supported by Republicans and Democrats, focused on strengthening America’s energy security.

This bill is sponsored and led by Congressman Tom Rice, and it clarifies an
existing law dealing with tax credits for nuclear energy production and making sure these credits work effectively for America. It addresses an urgent problem that now poses a threat to America’s energy security and, by extension, national security.

As a result of an uncertainty with respect to the nuclear production tax credit, there is a risk of construction grinding to a halt on several cutting-edge nuclear power plants in our country. But, while our global competitors like Russia and China are pushing forward nuclear power to bolster their own energy sectors,

Nuclear power is critical to an all-of-the-above strategy for American energy independence and our national security. It is urgent that we take action now to solve this issue in our Tax Code and provide the certainty that our energy innovators need to continue moving forward with construction. That is exactly what Congressman Rice’s bill will do.

To be clear, I would rather be standing here today to announce that this important bill is part of overall tax reform. But the fact is that our focus on that important goal doesn’t prevent us from acting to solve urgent problems in existing law like this.

The fact is this bill is not what Washington calls a tax extender. That circus isn’t coming back to town. This bill is a solution to a serious and immediate problem in our Tax Code that threatens our energy security. That is why we are moving it forward right now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman Rice for his leadership on H.R. 1551 and the strong support from the South Carolina and Georgia delegations, all who have weighed in on this. And as we continue working with President Trump in the Senate to deliver comprehensive tax reform this year, we should pass this bill now, provide greater certainty for our nuclear energy innovators.

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

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman Rice for his introduction of this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, President Trump and I agree on many issues facing our Nation today. We share our number one priority: national security. Energy independence is crucial to our mutual vision to safeguard the United States. That is why I stand before my colleagues in the Nation today in support of H.R. 1551 to modify the nuclear production tax credit.

Energy independence is critical to the Energy Policy Act provided production tax credits for reactors with a deadline of 2020. When the law was enacted, Congress did not anticipate the sunset date would place a hardship on energy producers. As every businessman knows, the unexpected happens in the real world.

My district is leading the way in the expansion of our Nation’s nuclear energy resources, constructing two of the first nuclear reactors in the United States in more than 30 years. In fact, the 12th District of Georgia will have more than 75 percent of the nuclear generating capacity of the Southern Company.

Also, because Georgia has been ranked as the number one place to locate your business for the last 4 years is because we enjoy extremely low power rates.

In an unfortunate turn of events, Westinghouse filed for bankruptcy, which could result in the nuclear units coming online at Plant Vogtle a little later than 2020. H.R. 1551 will assist our Nation’s energy producers to complete Plant Vogtle’s units 3 and 4. Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely critical. This change will not cost the taxpayer an additional dime.

You may ask: Why is this a national security issue? As it has been mentioned, China and Russia continue to make heavy investments in nuclear energy. We cannot send a signal to the rest of the world that nondemocratic countries are leading the way in nuclear production and that America is not investing in our own energy independence.

Mr. Speaker, Plant Vogtle is critical to provide clean low-cost energy to Georgians. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this critical important legislation.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD).

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise in support of H.R. 1551, and I want to thank Mr. Rice for his hard work on this bill and the way he shepherded it through the legislative process. I think it is awfully important for a number of different reasons. It is important for the reason of the environment.

I come from the low country of South Carolina, and we are seeing firsthand sea level rise and its effect. We can have a huge debate on what is causing that, what is not causing that. But in the meantime, there is a clear scientific consensus on the idea of increased CO2 emissions being tied to this notion of global warming, which very much impacts my congressional district. It impacts a lot of places around the world.

So I think that there is no perfect energy source out there, in fairness to my colleague. But of the available choices out there, I think that something that does address the CO2 emission question is awfully important, and nuclear does. I think it is also important from the standpoint of base load in terms of energy in this country and its importance in terms of competitiveness around the world.

Gordon Sullivan wrote a book entitled “Hope is not a Method,” and he talked about we may hope for a whole host of different breakthroughs in terms of alternatives, and I do hope that they come through, whether that is solar or tidal or who knows what. I think that there are emerging technologies there, but, in the meantime, we have to handle this issue of base load from the standpoint of our ability to compete with the world in terms of baseline energy as it relates to business and it relates to, frankly, the ability to cool one’s house in the warm air of South Carolina, or I guess the southwest these days.

I think it is also important from the standpoint of the energy independence. This idea of domestic production becomes incredibly important given the way in which we are dealing with a whole host of different places around the globe that at times don’t want what is best for America but want what is best for their region to the exclusion, at times, of what is best for America.

Mr. Speaker, this idea of energy independence, I think, is also an important consideration into H.R. 1551. It is for that reason that I come by for a second to thank Tom Rice for his hard work in shepherding this bill forward.

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

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

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I cannot overstate the importance this legislation represents to the future of nuclear energy production in the United States.

The Ways and Means Committee noted when it approved this same measure last year, while the committee continues to work on comprehensive tax reform as a critical means of promoting economic growth and job creation, it is important to provide immediate clarity and certainty on tax issues affecting American businesses, and this legislation will provide just that.
I would also like to thank Chairman Brady for his continued support of H.R. 1551, as well as the bipartisan support we received when this bill was voted out of committee by voice vote last week.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for continued bipartisan support from my colleagues here in the House in passing this legislation, not just because it makes common sense changes to the credit but because of the extreme sense of urgency to provide certainty for our nuclear industry.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Rice) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1551, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MODERNIZING THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE ACT

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker. I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2742) to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to adopt an electronic system to help expedite the placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption, across State lines, and to provide funding to aid States in developing such a system, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2742

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 "Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) when a child in foster care cannot return safely home, the child deserves to be placed in a setting that is best for that child, regardless of whether it is in the child’s State or another State;

(2) the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) was established in 1960 to provide a uniform legal framework for the placement of children across State lines in foster and adoptive homes;

(3) frequently, children waiting to be placed with an adoptive family, relative, or foster parent in another State spend more time waiting for this to occur than children who are placed with an adoptive, family, relative, or foster parent in the same State, because of administrative burdensome ICPC process;

(4) no child should have to wait longer to be placed in a loving home simply because the child’s State fails to provide an administratively burdensome ICPC process;

(5) the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) was launched in August 2014 in Indiana, Nevada, Florida, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia, has since expanded into Illinois, Virginia, Rhode Island, California, Alaska, Nebraska, and has expanded to be an electronic interstate case-processing system with administrative cost reductions and the amount of staff time required to process these cases, and case workers can now helping children find homes instead of copying and mailing paperwork between States;

(6) Section 437 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629g) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(c) FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM TO EXPEDITE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE OR GUARDIANSHIP, OR FOR ADOPTION.

SEC. 4. PROVIDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM TO EXPEDITE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE OR GUARDIANSHIP, OR FOR ADOPTION.

SEC. 5. STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.

SEC. 6. STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.

SEC. 7. SEC. 7. AUTHORITIES.

SEC. 8. SEC. 8. IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS.

SEC. 9. SEC. 9. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

SEC. 10. SEC. 10. PROVISION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUNDING.

SEC. 11. SEC. 11. MANNER OF USE OF THE FUNDS.

SEC. 12. SEC. 12. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE USE OF FUNDS.
Mr. Speaker, finally, I enter into the RECORD a list of 17 organizations that wrote in support of H.R. 2742.

1. American Academy of Adoption Attorneys
2. American Academy of Assisted Reproductive Technology Attorneys
3. American Academy of Pediatrics
4. American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
5. American Public Human Services Association
6. Child Advocates, Indianapolis, IN
7. Child Welfare League of America
8. Children's Home Society of America
9. CVS Health
10. Generations United
11. Indiana Department of Child Services
12. March of Dimes
13. National Association of Counties
14. National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
15. Partnership for Strong Families
16. The Villages of Indiana
17. Voice for Adoption

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this important bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I strongly support H.R. 2742, the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

Cross-State placement of youth in foster care is particularly salient to children living with kinship caregivers. Given that my congressional district is home to the highest percentages of grandparent caregivers in the Nation, I am pleased to join with Congresswoman WALORSKI in leading this important legislation.

This bill helps reduce the barriers and delays that continue to exist when the best new home for a child is in a different State than the unsafe home the child had to leave. Removing barriers that delay or prevent interstate child placement is a longtime bipartisan goal within Congress.

This bill addresses an important factor in those delays: the ability of State computer systems to link up to process the paperwork. The current paper-based system is antiquated and slow.

As part of an HHS pilot project, seven States, and the District of Columbia, currently participate in the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise, or NEICE. This is a cloud-based electronic system that allows for the electronic exchange of data between States. It started as a pilot project, but the results have been crystal clear: placement wait times dropped by a month and a half, States spent less time and money on copying and mailing, and caseworkers saved valuable time.

NEICE is now effective in 16 States, including Mr. Davis’ home State of Illinois, but we can’t stop at 16. As it stands today, if a child in my district in South Bend, Indiana, needed to be placed with their grandparents just 11 miles away in Niles, Michigan, the two States would have to undertake that arduous paperwork process because Michigan is not a part of NEICE yet.

All States need to be a part of this system in order to realize its full benefits. That is where the bill before us comes in. H.R. 2742 represents a very important step in the future of at-risk youth. It requires States to join the NEICE system by October 1, 2027, and sets aside $5 million in existing Federal funds to facilitate States in joining or expanding their services under NEICE.

That money doesn’t come without strings. States must apply for the funds and submit detailed plans. The Secretary of Health and Human Services will have to submit periodic reports to Congress so that we can monitor progress as States join and ensure that this program continues to cut wait times for children and administrative costs for States.

In the 114th Congress, this legislation passed the House of Representatives, but, unfortunately, did not come up for a vote in the Senate. It is our hope that we can cross the finish line this year and help at-risk youth find their forever home more quickly.

I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) for being a great partner in introducing this legislation and Senators Young, Grassley, and Gillibrand for introducing companion legislation in the Senate.
often emphasizes that we need to operate in “kid time” and not “adult time,” meaning that we need to recognize the urgency of restoring permanency for children in child welfare rather than allowing adult bureaucracy to impede permanency.

Modifying the technology to increase efficiencies and quicken placements is common sense and respects the urgency of finding permanent, loving homes for children.

This is a good bill, and I thank Congresswoman WALORSKI and her staff for their excellent work. Our States are joined together, so we join with this legislation.

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

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), an outstanding legislator.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I salute all of those who are here today offering the bills—this one, and the four other related bills—that are being considered; particularly, Mr. DAVIS, who now holds the position as ranking Democrat on the Human Resources Subcommittee, a job that I have held for the last several years; and Ms. BASS, who has so ably led our Caucus. The fact that we have been called upon to address this problem is unfortunate that they are here; unfortunate because all of this business should have been resolved last year.

All five of these modest bills would already be helping children today but for the way the so-called Family First Prevention Services Act was bungled last year. Each of these five bills were a part of it. But, unfortunately, families, and particularly families caring for foster children, have not, and are still living among the first priorities of this Congress.

Of course, here in the House, there were many speeches. We had extensive hearings year after year concerning foster children and the horrors of child abuse. But speeches alone can’t do the job.

There are also many people of goodwill who genuinely care about this foster care problem in both parties. Mrs. WALORSKI is certainly one of those individuals.

But all of us encountered a big problem last year in the Ways and Means Committee when the Family First Prevention Services Act came up. It was the same problem we faced in the last Congress when Senator WYDEN and I offered a larger version of the same piece of legislation.

The Ways and Means Committee majority leadership objects to adding a dime of additional revenue to accompany our speeches. The majority rejected my recommendation that a tax compliance measure to simply require the reporting of alimony payments. If you get alimony, it is a form of income, but there is no report required. This is not an increased tax. It is a way of avoiding tax evasion. And it would have raised the revenues necessary to fund the additional Family First prevention services.

When this reached the Senate, the House’s decision to reject that approach, or any other reasonable payoff, was, instead, relying on what you could call basically a “rob Peter to pay Paul” approach by cutting funds in support of adoptions and shifting funds from one part of the foster care system to another part. That, unfortunately, became the excuse in the Senate to block the bill from being passed. I have to say that my home State of Texas, under Federal court order, to correct its many unconstitutional abuses in the foster care system, wrongfully led the way in blocking the Family First bill.

As to the particular bills that we have up today, this one recognizes how mobile our society is how much work need to be able to go across the country in addressing this problem.

The earlier bill that we considered concerning children who age out of the foster system that Ms. BASS sponsored—we heard time and again about the challenges that those children face when they are, essentially, dumped out on the street at age 18 or age 21, depending on which State they are in; and challenges particularly for the women who find themselves in that situation without adequate preparation or adult help.

This bill that we considered addressed the primary problem of limited Federal investment in helping these vulnerable older youth prepare for independence. I don’t have any objection to it or to any of the bills that are being considered today. I object only to the ideological insistence of some in the majority that any additional revenue or tax measure, however reasonable, cannot be placed in a deficient foster care system, which too many of our States will not fix.

And today’s changes do not appear to add any actual new resources to foster care, and, indeed, they are likely to be overwhelmed by one cut after another that President Trump is proposing, particularly the Medicaid cuts that are being forced through this Congress, that are very important to foster youth and to children.

So in this Congress—so indifferent to the education and social service and health needs of children of all types across our country—perhaps only talking a little step is the best we can expect to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children in our society.

But I think all of us must be committed to work together to find a way when we are willing to take truly meaningful action before, rather than after, children—more children—are needlessly lost.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS). Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2742, the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

Children who cannot be safely returned home deserve to be placed in the best setting possible for them, regardless of the State where the setting is located; and no child should have to wait to move to that best setting because it is across the State line.

Separation from a parent or long-term caregiver is always traumatic for a child. Even if relatives come forward right away, it may take months to get licensed, months in which the child may bond with the foster family. When the relative lives in another State, the licensing process can often take as long as 6 months, so that might mean 6 months in foster care. Sometimes our well-intentioned efforts to protect children actually do them more harm.

H.R. 2742 provides States with resources to automate this process so that social workers do not have to photocopy documents and submit them on paper through a succession of offices.

Last year, the National Foster Youth Institute organized a listening tour in my State with Representative Vicky Hartzler’s district; and during a meeting with child welfare professionals, they described the challenges they face when relatives are identified in different States and they are unable to quickly place the child with family and must keep the child in foster care. The judges, social workers, and families specifically requested Members of Congress to change the law and asked the National Foster Youth Institute to please advocate for change. I look forward to communicating with the State’s Representative HARTZLER and her constituents about this legislation.

I ask my colleagues to support the legislation sponsored by Representa- tives WALORSKI and DAVIS, H.R. 2742.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, but I will say that my staff and I have been delightedly pleased to work with Representative WALORSKI and her staff in preparing this very commonsense, bipartisan legislation. I strongly support it and urge its passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Mr. Speaker, I want to close with the words from someone on the ground living this every day. Sharon Pierce is the president and CEO of The Villages of Indiana, the largest not-for-profit child and family services provider in my State and a supporter of H.R. 2742: “The NEICE system is going to be invaluable in helping both the public and private sector child welfare agencies reduce considerably the length of time..."
a child needs to wait for a forever family.

This isn’t just a good government bill, Mr. Speaker. Sure, we are reducing costs and paperwork and we can attach all sorts of numbers and dollar figures to that, but the most important thing we are doing here is we are giving at-risk youth a more permanent home sooner. We are giving them hope sooner. We are giving them a chance to actually thrive sooner.

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes.” I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2742.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PARTNERSHIP GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AFFECTED BY PARENTAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE ACT

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2834) to improve the well-being of, and improve permanency outcomes for, children and families affected by heroin, opioids, and other substance abuse issues.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2834

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 “Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act”.

SEC. 2. ENHANCEMENTS TO GRANTS TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES AFFECTED BY SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

Section 471(e)(6) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(f)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking "provide the well-being of children and families affected by parental substance abuse," as amended.

This isn’t just a good government bill, Mr. Speaker. Sure, we are reducing costs and paperwork and we can attach all sorts of numbers and dollar figures to that, but the most important thing we are doing here is we are giving at-risk youth a more permanent home sooner. We are giving them hope sooner. We are giving them a chance to actually thrive sooner.

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes.” I yield back the balance of my time.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PARTNERSHIP GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AFFECTED BY PARENTAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE ACT

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2834) to improve the well-being of, and improve permanency outcomes for, children and families affected by heroin, opioids, and other substance abuse issues.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2834

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 “Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act”.

SEC. 2. ENHANCEMENTS TO GRANTS TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES AFFECTED BY SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

Section 471(e)(6) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(f)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking "provide the well-being of children and families affected by parental substance abuse," as amended.

This isn’t just a good government bill, Mr. Speaker. Sure, we are reducing costs and paperwork and we can attach all sorts of numbers and dollar figures to that, but the most important thing we are doing here is we are giving at-risk youth a more permanent home sooner. We are giving them hope sooner. We are giving them a chance to actually thrive sooner.

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes.” I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2742.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PARTNERSHIP GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AFFECTED BY PARENTAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE ACT

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2834) to improve the well-being of, and improve permanency outcomes for, children and families affected by heroin, opioids, and other substance abuse issues.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2834
Historically, a lack of coordination and collaboration has hindered the ability of those working in the fields of child welfare and substance abuse, and even the courts, from fully supporting families in substance abuse crisis.

Families involved with child welfare have completed both two cases are alike. It is for this reason that improving outcomes for parents and children require a coordinated effort among all systems.

This bill strengthens the Regional Partnership Grants program, which provides funding to State and regional grantees seeking to provide evidence-based services to prevent child abuse and neglect related to substance abuse. Most importantly, this bill updates the RPG program to specifically address the opioid and heroin epidemics. By ensuring better coordination, this bill will also encourage States to address the well-being of the family as a whole, using evidence-based approaches to help families with children at the same time, so many children can stay safely at home with their families.

Finally, this bill is noncontroversial and it is bipartisan. Provisions in this bill were contained in the Family First Prevention Services Act last Congress, which passed the House by a voice vote. The Family First Act, as you recall, was supported by over 500 State and local organizations representing a wide range of practitioners and advocacy organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to stand with Mr. Davis in supporting this bill today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.

My home State of Illinois has led the Nation in addressing substance abuse issues in child welfare. We know that we need to do more to address this problem, but we know what works and we know we can work bipartisan to support families in addressing substance abuse so that we can increase permanency and safety.

When I ask foster youth what policymakers could do to make child welfare better, they almost always say: “You could have helped my mom and dad.” That is what we do today.

I urge passage of this important legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California, (Ms. Bass).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2834, the Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act.

This piece of legislation is responsive to countless pleas of youth and families seeking necessary assistance and support without fracturing critical family bonds and rejecting possibilities.

The majority of children who are removed from home are actually removed for neglect and not physical or sexual abuse. Over 60 percent of children are removed for neglect, and neglect is secondary to substance abuse, mental health issues, and abject poverty.

In the 1990s, when the crack cocaine epidemic hit, we didn’t understand much about addiction, and so we were not prepared. We imprisoned the mothers. We took the children away, and we didn’t realize that actually not addressing the underlying substance abuse issue would really be more harmful to the children than removing them and putting them into foster care.

Now that we are experiencing another epidemic related to drugs, both with meth and with heroin, at least our knowledge base has grown a lot. We have more evidence, more numbers, and evidence-based treatments. We have a lot of ways that we can address families.

One of the things that we have learned is that, if you can put the entire family in treatment, then, that way, one, the parents are not separated from their children, so the children can get help, and the parents can get help as well.

What often happens if you remove the child from the parent that is you put the parent up to relapse or to never actually go into treatment because they will cycle into depression, and they will continue their cycle of addiction.
We have had many children who actually wound up growing up in foster care because their parents were removed or asked us, why didn’t we help the family, why didn’t we help their parents. Sadly, what has happened to many of our young people who then go up, they continue the same cycle of going into depression, winding up in addiction.

Over the years, the National Foster Youth Institute in conjunction with the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth has organized many different delegations and trips around the country looking at different foster care systems. Our very first listening tour was in Los Angeles, and we visited a program called SHIELDS for Families. SHIELDS for Families is a very large drug treatment program that has functioned for over 20 years by keeping the entire family together, and some of these families can remain in residential care for as long as a year. They have been able to reduce the number of children who were removed and go into the foster care system because they provide treatment for the family as a whole.

This bill would modify the award criteria for Health and Human Services to consider whether a partnership has a track record of selective collaboration among child welfare, substance abuse disorder treatment, and mental health agencies. Simply put, this bill is designed to keep families together.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2834.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, over a decade of research shows the successes of helping families involved in the child welfare system who struggle with substance abuse. Through this research, we know that there are common interventions that help improve families’ outcomes: a system of identifying families, earlier access to assessment and treatment services, increased management of recovery services and compliance, increased judicial oversight, responses to participant behavior based on proven contingency management approaches, collaborative approaches across service systems and courts, and improved family-centered services and repair of parent-child relationships.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure for my staff and I to have the opportunity to work with Mrs. NOEM and her staff in preparing this legislation.

And I might note that on Saturday of this past week, a group of us in Illinois took two buses of children to a special program run by the Illinois Department of Corrections at the Sheridan Correctional Center to see their fathers, who were all involved in a special program established for individuals who were incarcerated for crimes dealing with substance and who, themselves, were substance users. This experience was so exciting in terms of these individuals finding help, and their children being able to interact with them, even though those children were incarcerated.

So, someone asked me what was I going to do for Father’s Day, and I told them after we returned that I have had my Father’s Day experience. If we can help these individuals to rid themselves of the tremendous habits and difficulty of substance use, then Father’s Day would be good enough.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM), and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I, again, want to applaud Mr. Davis for all of his work on this issue. I have a framework that has a big heart for our children, especially those that are in difficult situations such as we are discussing today.

This bill will help us protect the fundamental element of our society, and that is the family. It will keep families together. It will empower partnership with courts and child welfare workers to coordinate for the good of children, and I am proud to support this bill.

I ask for the support of this legislation that is before us, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS) asked the question. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2834, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT ACT

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2857) to support foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse, as amended.

The motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act”.

SEC. 2. FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH PARENTS IN A LICENSED RESIDENTIAL FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT FACILITY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

(a) In General.—Section 472 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(C), by striking ‘‘or’’ and inserting ‘‘, with a parent residing in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility, but only to the extent permitted under subsection (j), or in a’’; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

‘‘(j) CHILDREN PLACED RESIDING IN A LICENSED RESIDENTIAL FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT FACILITY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.’’

(b) In General.—Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this section, a child who is eligible for foster care maintenance payments under this section shall be eligible for such payments for a period of not more than 12 months during which the child is placed with a parent who is in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse, but only if—

(A) the recommendation for the placement is specified in the child’s case plan before the placement;

(B) the treatment facility provides, as part of the treatment for substance abuse, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling; and

(C) the substance abuse treatment, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling is provided under an organizational structure and treatment framework that is consistent with recognized principles of a trauma-informed approach and that includes interventions to address the consequences of trauma and facilitate healing.

(C) PAYMENT AMOUNT.—The amount the State may receive under section 474(a)(1) for a child placed with a parent who is in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse shall not exceed the amount the State would be eligible to receive under such section based on where the child would be appropriately placed in a setting described in section 474(b)(3)(B) if such treatment setting were not available.

(D) APPLICATION.—With respect to children for whom foster care maintenance payments are made under section (b) of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines whether the State is in compliance with the requirements of such section, and if so, the Secretary shall be deemed to be the State that has a 2-year legislative session, and the first regular session of the legislature shall take effect on October 1, 2017.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATES.—Subject to subsection (b), the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on October 1, 2017.

(b) TRANSITION RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a State plan under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires State legislation (other than legislation appropriating funds) in order for the plan to meet the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act, the State plan shall not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirements of such part solely on the basis of the failure of the plan to meet such additional requirements before the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the close of the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of enactment of this Act. For purposes of the previous sentence, in the case of a State that has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session shall be deemed to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.

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 “Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act”.

SEC. 2. FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH PARENTS IN A LICENSED RESIDENTIAL FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT FACILITY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

There was no objection.

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

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2857, current welfare reform legislation.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 2857, the Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act.

Substance abuse has had a devastating impact on families in the U.S. Between 60 to 80 percent of substantiated child abuse and neglect cases involve substance use by a custodial parent or guardian.

Early access to substance abuse treatment improves parental, family, and child-focused outcomes. However, treatment access can come at the cost of removing a child from their parents' care. This separation disrupts opportunities for mothers and children to develop emotional bonds, increasing the likelihood of childhood emotional and behavior problems.

Although research shows that keeping children in a parent's care while they seek treatment has benefits to the parent and the child, access to parent-child treatment centers have been limited. To address this concern, a significant number of programs in Illinois and nationally have led the way in family substance abuse treatment.

One example in my congressional district is the Haymarket Center, with its 16-bed pregnant and postpartum program. However, if that child is separated from their parent and placed in a foster family, the State can recoup funding for Federal funding up to 50 percent or more. This discrepancy effectively creates an incentive to separate children from their parents when one is receiving substance abuse treatment.

Under current law, States cannot receive Federal reimbursement if they choose to place both a parent and child in a family substance abuse treatment program. However, if that child is separated from their parent and placed with a foster family, the State can recoup a maximum of 50 percent of 50 percent or more. This discrepancy effectively creates an incentive to separate children from their parents when one is receiving substance abuse treatment.

However, studies have shown that keeping children in the care of their parents while they seek treatment can increase family bonding, child attachment, and family functioning, all while minimizing the trauma of separation for children.

Today, solutions to parental drug abuse that prioritize the family are increasingly necessary as the opioid epidemic continues to place unprecedented strains on our communities. According to one estimate, drug overdoses may now be the leading cause of death among Americans under the age of 50. And as more parents require substance abuse treatment, more children are placed into foster care. In families where I've found that between one-third and two-thirds of children enter foster care at least partly because of parental substance abuse.
Now, we know that foster care does wonders for many children every day, but it may not be the best match for every child, and the decision should not come down to cost.

In my district of Los Angeles, for instance, we have a program called the Exodus program, which has been shown to be incredibly effective for formerly homeless families. In fact, more than 80 percent of enrolled families have completed the program, and 95 percent have been able to keep their families together.

Even though we know that parent-child substance abuse models like Exodus have shown promising results, current law does not financially incentivize States to utilize these programs where they are available.

The Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act would address this problem by ensuring that if parents and children are placed in these programs and stay together, the State can receive the full Federal match for the child's living costs. States would retain full authority to decide which placement is best, but that consideration will now be based on what is best for the child, not what is most affordable for the State.

States should be given the option to use family-based treatment options without risking the loss of Federal foster care reimbursement. I urge my colleagues to consider our Nation’s families and how this legislation may impact those with heads of household who are struggling with addiction. We can heal them without creating new trauma or pain for their children.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2857.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, having no other speakers, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2857, to support foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential facility.

Last month, when the National Foster Youth Institute sponsored Foster Youth Shadow Day, several of the youth in a town hall meeting that we had, described their parents’ challenges with substance abuse. One young lady said that both of her parents were addicted to heroin, and that she was taken into court and, in front of her, the judge said to her parents: “If you don’t clean up, we’re going to take your children away.”

After she left court, she was taken away. She was removed from her parents. Ultimately, her parents continued to use, and, sadly, both of them died. This young woman grew up feeling guilty and feeling that part of the reason why her parents passed away was because she was used as leverage, and that if her parents had been kept together in drug treatment along with her maybe she wouldn’t be an orphan today and her parents would have lived and she could have grown up in foster care. H.R. 2857 will allow programs like SHIELDS for Families that does address parental substance abuse and keeps families together to have the resources to expand their programs.

Most of the five bills that addressed challenges in the child welfare system. We know that there is a lot more that needs to be done, but today we passed bills addressing substance abuse, relative caregivers, we identified and addressed barriers to placement, and I am hoping that one next step we could take would be to extend the kinship navigator programs so that organizations like Community Coalition can continue to provide support to relatives who expand their Kinship in Action program.

As we improve various parts of the system, at some point we need to address the structural problem with how the system is financed. Right now, we have removed a child and broken up a family in order to have the resources to help the child. We know much more now. We know what leads a parent to neglect the child: substance abuse, mental health issues, poverty. We need to continue to reform the system and provide the resources to prevent a crisis. When problems are identified, why should we wait for the neglect to occur?

Once again, I want to thank Chairman BRADY, Ranking Member NEAL, and all of the sponsors of the legislation today, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2857.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2857, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2844) to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:...
the long-term stability of countries and regions;
(2) the political participation, and leadership of women in fragile environments, particularly in the context of democratic transitions, is critical to sustaining lasting democratic institutions; and
(3) the United States should be a global leader, promoting the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts.

SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It shall be the policy of the United States to promote the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of overseas conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts, reinforced through diplomatic efforts and programs that—
(1) integrate the perspectives and interests of affected women into conflict-prevention activities and strategies;
(2) encourage partner governments to adopt and implement the meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes and decision-making institutions;
(3) promote the physical safety, economic security, and empowerment of women; and
(4) support the equal access of women to aid distribution mechanisms and services;
(5) collect and analyze gender data for the purposes of developing and monitoring early warning systems of conflict and violence;
(6) adjust policies and programs to improve outcomes in gender equality and the empowerment of women; and
(7) monitor, analyze, and evaluate the efforts related to each strategy submitted under section 5 and the impact of such efforts.

SEC. 5. UNITED STATES STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and again four years thereafter, the President, in consultation with the heads of the relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and make publicly available a single government-wide strategy, to be known as the Women, Peace, and Security Act, that describes the action and the implementation of how the United States intends to fulfill the policy objectives in section 4. The strategy shall—
(1) support and be aligned with plans developed by other countries to improve the meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes, conflict prevention, peace building, transitional processes, and decision-making institutions; and
(2) include specific and measurable goals, benchmarks, performance metrics, timeframes for developing and evaluating progress to ensure the accountability and effectiveness of all policies and initiatives carried out under the strategy.

(b) ICING PLANS FOR DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.—Each strategy under subsection (a) shall include a specific implementation plan from each of the relevant Federal departments and agencies that describes—
(1) the anticipated contributions of the department or agency, including technical, financial, and in-kind contributions, to implement the strategy; and
(2) the efforts of the department or agency to ensure that the policies and initiatives carried out under the strategy are designed to achieve maximum impact and long-term sustainability.

(c) COORDINATION.—The President should promote the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, in coordination and consultation with international partners, including, as appropriate, multilateral organizations, stakeholders, and other relevant international organizations, particularly in situations in which the direct representation of an agency of the United States Government is not appropriate or advisable.

(d) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that, in implementing each strategy submitted under subsection (a), should—
(1) provide technical assistance, training, and logistical support to female negotiators, mediators, peace builders, and stakeholders;
(2) address security-related barriers to the meaningful participation of women;
(3) encourage the participation of women in existing programs funded by the United States Government that provide training to foreign nationals regarding law enforcement, the rule of law, or professional military education;
(4) support appropriate local organizations, especially women’s peace building organizations;
(5) support the training, education, and mobilization of men and boys as partners in support of the meaningful participation of women;
(6) encourage the development of transitional justice and accountability mechanisms that are sensitive to the experiences and perspectives of women and girls;
(7) expand and apply gender analysis, as appropriate, to improve program design and targeting; and
(8) conduct assessments that include the perspectives of women regarding new initiatives in support of peace negotiations, transitional justice and accountability, efforts to counter violent extremism, or security sector reform.

SEC. 6. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING.

(a) FOREIGN SERVICE.—The Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall ensure that all appropriate personnel (including special envoys, members of mediation or negotiation teams, relevant members of the civil service or Foreign Service, and contractors) responsible for or deploying to countries or regions considered to be at risk of, undergoing, or emerging from violent conflict obtain training as appropriate, in the following areas:

(1) Conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution.

(2) Protecting civilians from violence, exploitation, and trafficking in persons.

(3) International human rights law and international humanitarian law.

(b) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that all appropriate personnel receive training as appropriate, in the following areas:

(1) Training in conflict prevention, peace processes, mitigation, resolution, and security initiatives that specifically addresses the importance of meaningful participation by women;

(2) Gender considerations and meaningful participation by women, including training regarding—

(A) International human rights law and international humanitarian law, as relevant; and

(B) protecting civilians from violence, exploitation, and trafficking in persons.

(3) Effective strategies and best practices for ensuring meaningful participation by women.

SEC. 7. CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development may establish guidelines or take other steps to ensure overseas United States personnel of the Department of State or the United States Agency for International Development, as the case may be, consult with appropriate stakeholders, including local women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, other politically underrepresented or marginalized populations, regarding United States efforts to—

(1) prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict; and

(2) enhance the success of mediation and negotiation processes by ensuring the meaningful participation of women.

(b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The Senate and the House of Representatives shall work with international, regional, national, and local organizations to increase the meaningful participation of women in international peacekeeping operations, and should promote training that provides international peacekeeping personnel with the substantive knowledge and skills needed to ensure effective physical security and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and peace building.

SEC. 8. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) BRIEFING.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the first submission of a strategy required under section 5, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the Secretary of Defense, shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on existing, enhanced, or newly established training carried out pursuant to section 6.

(b) REPORT ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY STRATEGY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the submission of each strategy required under section 5, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—

(1) summarizes and evaluates the implementation of such strategy and the impact of United States diplomatic efforts and foreign assistance programs, projects, and activities to promote the meaningful participation of women;

(2) describes the future and extent of the cooperation among the relevant Federal departments and agencies and international organizations on the implementation of such strategy;

(3) outlines the monitoring and evaluation tools, mechanisms, and common indicators to assess progress made on the policy objectives set forth in section 4; and

(4) describes the existing, enhanced, or newly established training carried out pursuant to section 6.

SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committees on Armed Services, and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) RELEVANT FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.—The term “relevant Federal departments and agencies” means—

(A) the United States Agency for International Development;

(B) the Department of State;

(C) the Department of Defense;

(D) the Department of Homeland Security; and

(E) any other department or agency specified by the President for purposes of this Act.
(3) **Stakeholders.**—The term "stakeholders" means nongovernmental and private sector entities engaged in or affected by conflict prevention and stabilization, peace building, protection, security, transition initiatives, humanitarian response, or related efforts.

The **Speaker** pro tempore. **Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) each will control 20 minutes.**

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

**General Leave**

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the **Record** on H.R. 2484.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017. I want to recognize Representatives KRISTI NOEM and JAN SCHAKOWSKY. I want to recognize the two of them for their bipartisan effort in putting together this legislation, this important piece of legislation. I think it is going to have a great impact.

I also want to thank Mr. ENGEL for his important leadership.

Our consideration of this measure is really the culmination of many years of bipartisan work by Members of the House, including Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY and Representative KRISTI NOEM, and by our prior administration officials, as well. Mr. President, we have worked on this, and many advocates—many advocates see better, more sustainable solutions to ending wars, to combating terrorism, and to improving human rights around the world. What we are seeing today is that women's participation is really essential to confronting these fundamental challenges.

Last year, the Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing in which we heard powerful testimony about the importance of including women in peace negotiations and in the security negotiations. Institutions that have been set up around the globe. They are men of course, who have the fundamental human right to have their voices heard in discussions affecting their lives and their families' lives, and that is a case in and of itself that we must continue to make.

But women's participation is also critical to realizing better outcomes with respect to these negotiations. Simply put, when women are at the negotiating table, it affects their communities, their peace, and the prospects for long-term peace. According to a 2012 study by the United Nations, conflicts where women participate are much more likely to last, when women's groups are genuinely involved.

Women peacebuilders often press war parties to move beyond mere power-sharing agreements—which, of course, benefit only a small percentage of fighters—toward longer terms that benefit the civilian population as a whole. We have seen this play out from Colombia to Rwanda, to Sri Lanka, where women gained credibility and practical solutions to deescalate and resolve the conflict, and certainly, in Northern Ireland, where, indisputably, the bravery and perseverance of the face of reprisal and pressure led women on both sides of that conflict to stay engaged until there was a lasting peace; at least, until today, there is a lasting peace in Northern Ireland, and that is because of their involvement.

Efforts to keep the peace through political means in these conflict-affected areas have also been able to continue this is an additional point—benefit from women's participation because it leads to better crime reporting and higher levels of trust within the communities they serve.

Women are essential to confronting one of the greatest national security threats of our time, and that is the spread of violent extremism because, if we think about it, women, of course, are on the front lines of this fight. They possess unique insights into the community, into their families, and are capable of gathering information often that men cannot or do not see. Yet their input is frequently overlooked, I would just give one example of many.

Activist Wazhma Frogh in Afghanistan recalls when women from a small Afghan village tried desperately to warn a government official that young men in the village were being Recruited by Islamist militants at the local weddings, the minister laughed them off. He said: The militants that we are fighting are much too sophisticated to go and recruit at the weddings here in the community. Well, of course, a month later, unfortunately, some of those same young men who had been recruited attacked a bus, killing 32 civilians.

My committee has heard similar stories from women around the world who want to reclaim their communities from the spread of radical ideologies. We must acknowledge women as partners in this fight, and that is why the legislation here recognizes that it is in our national interest to promote women's participation in resolving violence and conflict.

This concept has been building support for some time. The Bush administration was a leader for women's participation in peace negotiations and political processes in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere, and the Obama administration expanded on these programs to require a governmentwide approach to women's inclusion in conflict resolution overseas.

Today, this bipartisan legislation before us builds on these efforts. It will continue to require a governmentwide strategy to promote women's participation, along with specific goals and benchmarks and regular reporting to Congress in order to gauge progress.

It also requires that appropriate State, USAID, and Defense Department personnel receive training in how to facilitate women's participation in conflict resolution, security initiatives, and efforts to protect civilians from violence and to protect them from exploitation.

I urge all Members to support this measure's passage.

I again thank KRISTI NOEM and JAN SCHAKOWSKY for their good work on this bill.

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

**Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, Washington, DC, June 12, 2017.**

Hon. EDDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. Speaker: I am grateful to you concerning H.R. 2484, the "Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017." There are certain provisions in the bill which fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services.

In the interest of permitting your committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important legislation, I am willing to waive this committee's further consideration of H.R. 2484. I do so with the understanding that by waiving consideration of the bill, the Committee on Armed Services does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the legislation which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the Congressional Record during consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

William M. "Mac" Thornberry,
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee, Washington, DC.

**Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington, DC, June 12, 2017.**

Hon. William M. "Mac" Thornberry,
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee, Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. Chairman: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the House Armed Services Committee, and the Senate Armed Services Committee on the administration's proposed legislation on the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, and for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of that bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to consideration by the House.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services, or prejudice its jurisdictional position on similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 2484 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with your Committee.
June 20, 2017

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

H4973

as this measure moves through the legisla-

tive process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE, 

Chairman.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may con-

sume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this

measure.

I want to thank the bill’s authors, Rep-

resentative SCHAKOWSKY and Rep-

resentative NOEM, for their years’ worth of work on this measure. I also

want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for helping

move it forward.

Wherever there are conflicts around

the world, women and girls face par-

ticular vulnerabilities, but they also possess unique abilities to bring peace and prosperity to their communities.

Research has shown that getting

women involved in conflict resolution and peace building leads to better out-

comes. That is why the Obama admin-

istration launched its executive order on Women, Peace, and Security in 2011 to make sure women had a seat at the table when it came to conflict preven-
tion and resolution.

Thanks to the Obama administra-

tion’s efforts, the United States has worked to include women in conflict prevention, negotiation, and resolu-
tion. We have promoted efforts to en-

hance the physical and economic secu-

rity of women around the world, and we have sought to break through the barriers that have stopped women from being full participants in peace proc-

esses.

The bill we are considering will make these policies permanent. It would build on what the Obama administra-

tion has accomplished by making sure agency personnel across our govern-

ment are fully trained on the unique strengths women bring to conflict preven-
tion and resolution. It would also require annual reporting so Congress can stay apprised of these efforts.

Making this strategy permanent is

absolutely imperative. It is important

that we fully recognize and appreciate how women’s participation can help make our foreign policy stronger.

I am pleased to support this measure, and I urge all my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of

my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speak-

er, I yield 4 minutes to the gentle-

woman from South Dakota (Mrs.

NOEM), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the author of this important bill.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, you can’t hardly turn on the TV today or open a newspaper, scroll through your news feed without learning of another outbreak of violence around the globe. Especially in a world as volatile and inse-

cure as ours is today, we have a respon-
sibility to take full advantage of prov-
en peace-building tactics. This includes involving women in conflict prevention and resolution.

Research covering conflicts from

Northern Ireland to Africa has shown that peace agreements are 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years when women are involved. Even know-
ing this, women are many times left out during negotiations.

The truth is that conflict knows no gender. Just as women should not be a stranger, nor gender. With that said, women are

many times impacted by conflict in different ways than their male counter-

parts.

ISIL, for instance, has used human trafficking and sex slavery, which dis-

proportionately impacts women, as an income-generating business for their terrorist activities. Women need to be able to play a major role in addressing this and finding solutions to combat it. Making this strategy permanent is

important. It could save countless lives while building a more peaceful and economically prosperous future.

Despite the strong evidence in favor of women’s political participation, women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and the post-conflict peace-building ef-

forts that are happening around the world, and the United States can help to change that.

Our legislation establishes women’s

participation as a permanent element of U.S. foreign policy. It would encour-
ge the United States to assist women mediators and negotiators by addressing barriers to their equal and secure participation in the peace process.

It would institute comprehensive training modules on litigation, rights, and specific needs of women in conflict and require the administration to evaluate the impact of U.S. foreign assistance on women’s meaningful participation.

In addition, Women, Peace, and Secu-

rity Act would require the President to report to Congress its strategy to pro-
mote women’s participation in conflict prevention and resolution, and it would empower Congress to exercise over-

sight of that strategy’s implementation.

The United States plays a crucial role in encouraging peace agreements all over the world. By making sure
that we bring women into the peace process, we can improve national and global security.

So, once again, I just want to thank Congresswoman NOEM, my partner on this bipartisan legislation, as well as Chairman ED ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOI ENGEL, for their support. I want to thank the many advocacy groups who have been persistent throughout these years in bringing it to us, the evidence of the success of women when women participate in the peace process.

So I thank the gentleman again for yielding.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, seeing no other speakers on my side, I am prepared to close as long as there are no other speakers on the majority side.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, once again, Chairman Ed ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL, and Representatives SCHAKOWSKY and NOEM for their hard work.

I again urge a “yes” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, from Liberia to Northern Ireland, to, frankly, all over the planet, we have watched women play pivotal roles in pushing their governments, in pushing combatants and politicians to bring an end to conflict.

In recent years, we have seen armed conflicts flare around the world, producing the largest number of refugees on record. Efforts to negotiate an end to these conflicts are more important than ever. We know that when women are included in these discussions, we are more likely to see an enduring peace.

As a witness at our hearing on women’s participation explained: “Including women is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.”

The legislation before us today will strengthen U.S. efforts to promote the inclusion of women in peace negotiations in order to create more sustainable agreements and more stable partners for the United States and for the U.S. allies.

So, again, I want to thank Representative SCHAKOWSKY for her bipartisan work. I also want to particularly thank the staff on both sides of the aisle who have worked so hard over the past couple of years, including Jesscia Kelch, Cassandra Varanka, Britany Comins, Elizabeth Cunningham, and Jenny Kaguyutan. We appreciate all of your good work.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I ask for an “aye” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MENG of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2484, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 which expresses that the United States should be a global leader in promoting the meaningful participation of women in efforts directed at conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

This bill directs the President to develop and submit to Congress a Women, Peace, and Security Strategy that will:

1. Be aligned with other nations’ plans to improve their participation in peace and security over processes, conflict prevention, peace building, and decision making; and
2. Lay out goals and evaluation plans to measure strategy effectiveness.

Additionally, H.R. 2484 directs that employees and contractors of the Department of State, Department of Defense, and the U.S. Agency for International Development that personnel deployed to countries or regions at risk or emerging from violent conflict be provided training in conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution.

This training will allow those deployed to these regions to collaborate and support women who live in these conflict ridden communities to develop peace and security strategies.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues, I understand the importance of women’s security and its role in conflict prevention and resolution.

This is why in the 114th Congress I introduced H. Res. 528 that seeks to create a Violence against Women’s Protection Fund for the displaced refugees, migrants and victims of Boko Haram’s terror in the region, many of which are women and children.

One reason women play such a critical role in the peacebuilding process is because they constitute half of every community.

Educating women and men to work in tandem is an imperative step toward instilling peace in communities and mending broken bonds.

An important aspect of H.R. 2484 is the inclusion of training personnel who work first-hand in these conflicted regions regarding international human rights laws and the protection of trafficked people.

Nearly 21 million people have fallen victim to human trafficking globally, and more than half of them are children.

These numbers are staggering, and victims who have been liberated from this awful slavery require special consideration and support to overcome the horrors they have experienced with the aid of women peacekeepers.

Women serve as incredible advocates for peace as central caretakers of the family and have already played prominent roles in peace processes in the Horn of Africa.

Overall, H.R. 2484 makes an important contribution by requiring the agencies that focus on food and agriculture related to food, agriculture, and security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendments thereto, and in the Senate amendment.

The Clerk reads the title of the bill. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendments.

SECURING OUR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD ACT

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker’s table the bill (H.R. 1238) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk reads as follows:

Senator amendments:

1. On page 4, lines 1 and 2, strike relating to food and agriculture and insert “or the Secretary of Health and Human Services”.

2. On page 4, strike line 3 and all that follows through the end of the latter following line 6 and insert the following:

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) by striking the items relating to sections 523, 524, 525, 526, and 527; and
Mr. CATKO (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

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

There was no objection.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TRAVELER REDRESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. CATKO, Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2132) to require the implementation of a redress process and review of the Transportation Security Administration’s intelligence-based screening rules for aviation security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows: H.R. 2132

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 “Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017.”

SEC. 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF REDRESS PROCESS AND REVIEW OF THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION’S INTELLIGENCE-BASED SCREENING RULES FOR AVIATION SECURITY.

(a) Redress Process.—

(1) In general.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall, using existing resources, systems, and processes, ensure the availability to the Department of Homeland Security Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP) redress process to adjudicate inquiries for individuals who—

(A) are citizens of the United States or aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence;

(B) have filed an inquiry with DHS TRIP after active enhanced screening at an airport passenger security checkpoint more than three times in any 60-day period; and

(C) believe they have been wrongly identified as being a threat to aviation security.

(2) Report.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall submits to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the implementation of the redress process required under paragraph (1).

(b) Privacy Impact Review and Update.—

(1) In general.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the implementation of the Privacy Impact Assessment for the Secure Flight programs to ensure such Assessment accurately reflects the operation of such programs.

(2) Public Dissemination.—The Secure Flight Privacy Impact Assessment review required under paragraph (1) shall be published on a publically accessible internet webpage of the Transportation Security Administration and submitted to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(c) Transporta tion Security Administra tion Rule Review and Notification Process.—

(1) Rule review.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and every 120 days thereafter, the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Intelligence Analysis of the Transportation Security Administration, in coordination with the entities specified in paragraph (2), shall conduct a comprehensive review of the Transportation Security Administration’s intelligence-based screening rules.

(2) Notification process.—Not later than 48 hours after changing, updating, implementing, or suspending such rules, the Assistant Administrator shall notify the following entities of any such change, update, implementation, or suspension, as the case may be:

(A) The General Counsel of the Transportation Security Administration;

(B) The Office of the Ombudsman of the Department;

(C) The Office of Traveler Engagement of the Department;

(D) The Office of Civil Rights and Liberties of the Department of Homeland Security;

(E) The Office of Chief Counsel of the Administration;

(F) The Office of General Counsel of the Department;

(G) The Privacy Office of the Administration;

(H) The Privacy Office of the Department; and

(I) The Federal Air Marshal Service.

(d) Federal Air Marshal Service Coordination.—

(1) In general.—The Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall ensure that the Transportation Security Administration’s intelligence-based screening rules are incorporated in the risk analysis conducted during the Federal Air Marshal mission scheduling process.

(2) Report.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on how the Transportation Security Administration’s intelligence-based screening rules are incorporated in the risk analysis conducted during the Federal Air Marshal mission scheduling process.

(e) GAO Report.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a study on the Transportation Security Administration’s intelligence-based screening rules and the effectiveness of such rules in identifying and mitigating potential threats to aviation security. Such study shall also examine coordination between the Transportation Security Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, and other relevant partners relating to changing, updating, implementing, or suspending such rules as necessary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CATKO) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CATKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself and my subcommittee staff for whatever time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation seeks to expand the Department of Homeland Security’s Traveler Redress Inquiry Program, commonly referred to as TRIP, to assist travelers who feel that they have been incorrectly selected for enhanced screening in an unfair manner.

Currently, the TRIP process only provides redress to individuals who have been placed on the no-fly list. However, for reasons unknown to the individual, they can be perpetually selected for enhanced screening without any opportunity to correct the record, if he or she fails, that is due to an error.

This issue first came to our attention when an individual who works for a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization alerted the committee that he had been subject to enhanced pat-downs by TSA agents every time he traveled through an airport for over 3 years.

Although he twice submitted inquiries to the Department of Homeland Security through the TRIP process, he remained unable to obtain information as to why he was currently getting flagged as a potential security threat at the airport.

As you can imagine, this can cause a great deal of stress and worry for someone who feels that they have been targeted by the U.S. Government for unknown reasons.

After continued prodding of TSA by my subcommittee staff, this individual, a U.S. citizen, was cleared by Homeland Security and is now able to travel with little or no hassle.

Unfortunately, this example is not an isolated case. Several weeks ago, a member of the committee staff also was repeatedly selected for enhanced
screening on multiple flights after traveling to the Middle East as part of an official congressional staff delegation.

When my staff looked into this case, the staffer had been mistakenly flagged for enhanced screening due to erroneous information that was entered into the Terrorist Screening Database, or TSDB.

As these anecdotes demonstrate, Homeland Security needs to establish a formal mechanism to handle these cases. My legislation requires the Department to do just that.

I would like to thank Chairman McCaul, Congressmen King and Vela, and Congresswoman Watson Coleman for their support of this bipartisan legislation. I thank the Speaker for allowing today's consideration of the bill, and I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. Thompson of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2132, the Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the American flying public has seen many changes in how aviation security is handled since the devastating morning of September 11, 2001. Among the most prominent changes has been the screening of passenger names against the so-called no-fly list that contains the information on tens of thousands of people who are deemed by our intelligence and law enforcement community as threats to aviation.

H.R. 2132 seeks to ensure a traveler, who has repeatedly received enhanced security screening at Transportation Security Administration checkpoints and believes they have wrongly been identified as posing a threat to aviation security, can receive timely redress from the Department of Homeland Security's Traveler Redress Inquiry Program, or DHS TRIP program. Specifically, this bill directs TSA to ensure that an individual who has received enhanced screening from TSA more than three times in a 60-day period can access the Department's redress process.

This bipartisan bill, which was unanimously approved by the Homeland Security Committee on May 3, is informed by the committee's oversight finding. As such, I support the bill and urge my colleagues to join me in passing this important legislation to increase transparency and accountability on behalf of travelers.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, H.R. 2132, the Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017, would improve DHS redress processes for passengers who have repeatedly been selected for enhanced security screening and feel they have been wrongly identified as posing a threat to aviation security.

While TSA has a duty to protect classified and sensitive information from those who wish to do us harm, we must ensure TSA's operations are transparent as they can be for the vast majority of passengers who are simply trying to travel from point A to point B with as little stress as possible.

Before I yield back, I thank Subcommittee Chairman Katko and Ranking Member Watson Coleman for their long and enduring work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. Jackson Lee. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I rise in support of H.R. 2132, "Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017," which requires the implementation of a redress process and review of the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules for aviation security.

The DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP) provides a redress process for individuals who have been denied or delayed airline boarding, entry into or exit from the United States at a port of entry or border crossing, or have been repeatedly referred for additional (secondary) screening.

I thank the Committee for accepting the Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 2132, which extends the time for GAO to submit its report from 180 days to one year.

The Jackson Lee Amendment gives GAO additional time to do its work after TSA concludes its work on the Privacy Impact Assessment for the Secure Flight program.

In 2015, there were 178 days when TSA screened more than 2 million passengers in a single day.

George Bush International and William P. Hobby Airports are essential hubs for domestic and international air travel for Houston and the region.

Nearly 40 million passengers traveled through Bush International Airport (IAH) and an additional 10 million traveled through William P. Hobby (HOU).

Persons who routinely undergo secondary screening or incur delays in boarding flights only have the DHS TRIP as their sole means of redress.

DHS TRIP is a single point of contact for individuals who have inquiries or seek resolution regarding travel difficulties that may be caused by watch list issues, screening problems at ports of entry, and situations where travelers believe they have been unfairly or incorrectly delayed, denied boarding or identified for additional screening at our nation's transportation hubs.

H.R. 2132 requires TSA, to report within 180 days on the implementation of the redress process to the Committee on Homeland Security and the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

TSA is also required to review and update the Privacy Impact Assessment Act for the Secure Flight programs in order to make sure this assessment reflects the operation of the DHS TRIP.

As an added measure to ensure DHS TRIP has the most up to date information, the TSA Assistant Administrator of the Office of Intelligence Analysis must conduct a comprehensive review of TSA's intelligence-based screening rules every 120 days.

Once this review is completed, the Office of Intelligence Analysis of TSA has 48 hours to notify relevant DHS offices if there is any change, update, implementation, or suspension of any rule or method.

Reviewing the screening rules allows TSA to keep the methods that are used for security as up to date as possible and to ensure that all travelers are treated fairly.

I am a strong proponent of privacy, civil liberties, and due process.

The Federal Privacy Act ensures that when agencies use electronic databases to collect, retain, process, or make decisions regarding U.S. citizens that their privacy is protected.

I ask my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to vote in support of H.R. 2132.

The Speaker pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. Katko) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2132, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORTING EFFICIENTLY TO PROPER OFFICIALS IN RESPONSE TO TERRORISM ACT OF 2017

Mr. Katko. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 625) to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, and for other purposes, as amended.

The motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SEC. 1815

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act of 2017" or the "REPORT Act".

SEC. 2. DUTY TO REPORT.

(a) DUTY IMPOSED.—Whenever an act of terrorism occurs in the United States, it shall be the duty of the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and, as appropriate, the head of the National Counterterrorism Center, to submit, within one year of the completion of the investigation concerning such act by the primary
Government agency conducting such investigation, an unclassified report (which may be accompanied by a classified annex) to Congress concerning such act.

(b) Governors or Attorneys General.—A report under this section shall—

(1) include a statement of the facts of the act of terrorism, in a form prescribed by the Attorney General, as known at the time of the report;

(2) identify any gaps in national security that could be addressed to prevent future acts of terrorism;

(3) any recommendations for additional measures that could be taken to improve homeland security, including potential changes in law enforcement practices or changes in law, with particular attention to changes that could help prevent future acts of terrorism.

(c) Exception.—The duty established under subsection (a) shall not apply in instances in which the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or the head of the National Counterterrorism Center determines that the information required to be reported could jeopardize an ongoing investigation or prosecution. In such instances, the Secretary shall notify Congress of such prior to the first anniversary of the completion of the investigation described in such subsection.

(d) Definition.—In this section, the term "act of terrorism" has the meaning given such term in section 3077 of title 18, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. Katko) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. Thompson) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the legislation has an obligation to ensure that our national counterterrorism programs and policies are as effective as possible. At every opportunity, we should assess gaps and weaknesses and work to find opportunities for improvement.

For example, the committee’s investigation into the 2013 tragic Boston Marathon bombings revealed a series of weaknesses we have worked to correct; and many of the recent attacks, including the San Bernardino and Garland shootings, the Orlando Pulse nightclub attack, and other small-scale plots have each prompted review, reflection, and action.

The REPORT Act will provide valuable assistance in this work by requiring the Department of Homeland Security, in coordination with other Federal officials, to submit a report to Congress on incidents of terrorism within 1 year of completion of the investigation.

Importantly, this report will provide Congress with the facts of the incident, a review of security gaps, and recommendations to improve homeland security efforts.

As the committee has learned over the years, it can often be a challenge to obtain timely and comprehensive sharing of information by the executive branch in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. While perhaps understandable, the REPORT Act, offered by Congressman Aguilar, will help ensure that Congress receives the information it needs, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman Aguilar for introducing this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Thompson of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 625, the Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the REPORT Act creates an important new congressional oversight tool with respect to incidents of terrorism on U.S. soil. H.R. 625 requires the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the FBI, and, as appropriate, the National Counterterrorism Center, to submit an unclassified report, which may be accompanied by a classified annex, to Congress within a year of the completion of an investigation of an act of terrorism.

The report to Congress must outline the facts and information related to the terrorist act but may also discuss national security gaps that come to light in the investigation that may be addressed by changes in law enforcement practices or changes in law.

The gentleman from California (Mr. Aguilar), introduced the REPORT Act to ensure that this body has the benefit of learning, long after the press attention has moved to other matters, the facts surrounding terrorist incidents.

The legislation is informed by the gentleman’s experience as the representative for San Bernardino, California, which, of course, was the target of a vicious December 2015 attack that resulted in the death of 14 innocent victims.

I would note that, in order to protect any ongoing investigation or prosecution, the congressional notification can be waived if doing so presents a danger of interference to any ongoing terrorist investigation.

As a cosponsor of H.R. 625, I strongly believe that this legislation will enhance our ability as Members of Congress to help heal our communities after an attack and help prevent future terrorist attacks to keep Americans safe.

I urge my House colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. Aguilar).

Mr. Aguilar. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act, or the REPORT Act.

I introduced the REPORT Act a year after the San Bernardino terrorist attack. Our community has seen more than its fair share of gun violence, but the terrorist attack in San Bernardino claimed 14 lives, injured another 22 people, and shook my community. In the days and weeks after, we pledged to do all we could to prevent another attack like this from happening ever again. This is what this bill seeks to do.

The REPORT Act requires the Department of Homeland Security to submit a report to Congress when a terrorist attack occurs in the United States. Under the bill, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the United States Attorney General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the head of the National Counterterrorism Center will produce a report detailing the attack and how to prevent future attacks.

The idea is to have a uniform after-action report following a terrorist attack here in the United States. There is currently no legal requirement to create such a report. Specifically, this report will include policy recommendations for lawmakers to make our communities safer and to prevent the next San Bernardino, Boston, New York, or Orlando.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bipartisan bill. It also has the support of regional leaders in communities impacted by acts of terror. It has been endorsed by my region’s law enforcement community: San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan and Sheriff John McMahon. Chief Burguan and Sheriff McMahon are my community’s law enforcement leaders who led the heroic response on December 2, 2015, and stopped the violent rampage, preventing further loss of life.

The REPORT Act is a commonsense bill that will empower lawmakers with the facts they need to create meaningful laws to thwart future attacks of terror.

This bill is for the 14 killed and 22 injured in San Bernardino. It is for my community. It is also for every American city touched by these heinous acts of terrorism.

We can and must work together to protect our homeland, and I believe this is a smart, bipartisan step to achieve that.

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, H.R. 625 is an important piece of legislation that has strong support on both sides of the aisle.

Effective communication and unity of effort is critical immediately following a terrorist attack. It is our duty as Members of Congress to give law enforcement space to do their investigations but then, when the facts are known, to get them and then use that knowledge to inform policymaking.

H.R. 625 seeks to do just that. As such,
The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1873, ELECTRICITY RELIABILITY IMPROVEMENT AND FOREST PROTEC- TION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1654, WATER SUPPLY PERMISSION CO- ORDINATION ACT

Mr. NEWHOUSE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–186) on the resolution (H. Res. 392) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1654) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1654) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H. R. 2847, by the yeas and nays, and H. R. 2866, by the yeas and nays.

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

IMPROVING SERVICES FOR OLDER YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2847) to make improvements to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and related provisions, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.
The vote was taken by electronic device, and not voting 29, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yeas</th>
<th>Noes</th>
<th>Not Voting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>218</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ms. FOXX changed her vote from “nay” to “yea.” 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.

REDDUCING UNNECESSARY BARRIERS FOR RELATIVE FOSTER PARENTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas), the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2866) to review and improve licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home, as amended, on which the yes 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended. This is a 5-minute vote.

Mr. POE of Texas changed his vote from “nay” to “yea.” 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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended. This is a 5-minute vote.
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, MORALE, RECOGNITION, LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2283) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to improve morale within the Department of Homeland Security workforce by conferring new responsibilities to the Chief Human Capital Officer, establishing an employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans, and authorizing an annual employee award program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2283

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 “Department of Homeland Security, Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017,” or the “DHS MORALE Act.”


(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting “including with respect to leader development and employee engagement,” after “policies”;

(ii) by striking “and in line” and inserting “;”;

(iii) by inserting “and informed by best practices within the Federal government and the private sector,” after “priorities.”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “develop performance measures to provide a basis for monitoring and evaluating” and inserting “evaluate, on an ongoing basis,”;

(C) in paragraph (3), by inserting “that, to the extent practicable, are informed by employee feedback,” after “policies”;

(D) in paragraph (4), by inserting “including leader development and employee engagement programs,” before “in coordination”;

(E) in paragraph (5), by inserting before the semicolon at the end the following: “that is informed by an assessment, carried out by the Chief Human Capital Officer, of the learning and development needs of employees in supervisory and non-supervisory roles across the Department and appropriate workforce planning initiatives”;

(F) by redesignating paragraphs (9) and (10) as paragraphs (11) and (12), respectively; and

(G) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following new paragraphs:

“(9) develop an inventory of available employee development opportunities, including the Homeland Security Rotation Program pursuant to section 944, departmental leadership development programs, interagency development programs, and other rotational programs;

“(10) ensure that employee discipline and adverse action programs comply with the requirements of all pertinent laws, rules, regulations, and Federal guidance, and ensure due process for employees;”;

“(ii) as a subsection (e) and (f), respectively;

(3) by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection:

“(d) ESTABLISHMENT AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER.—The Chief Human Capital Officer may designate an employee of the Department to serve as a Chief Learning and Engagement Officer to assist the Chief Human Capital Officer in carrying out this section.”;

and

(4) in subsection (e), as so redesignated—

(A) by redesigning paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) as paragraphs (5), (6), and (7), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraphs:

“(2) information on employee development opportunities catalogued pursuant to paragraph (9) of this subsection and any available data on participation rates, attrition rates, and impacts on retention and employee satisfaction;

“(3) information on the progress of Department-wide strategic workforce planning efforts as determined under paragraph (2) of subsection (b);

“(4) information on the activities of the steering committee established pursuant to section 710(a), including the number of meetings, types of materials developed and distributed, and recommendations made to the Secretary.”;

SEC. 3. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE AND ACTION PLAN. (a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 710. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT.

“(a) STEERING COMMITTEE.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall establish an employee engagement steering committee, including representatives from operational components, headquarters, and field personnel, including supervisory and non-supervisory personnel, and employee labor organizations that represent Department employees, and chaired by the Under Secretary for Management, to carry out the following activities:

“(1) Identify factors that have a negative impact on employee engagement, morale, and communications within the Department, such as perceptions about limitations on career progression, mobility, or development opportunities, collected through employee feedback platforms, including through anonymous employee feedback, questionnaires, and other communications, as appropriate.

“(2) Identify, develop, and distribute initiatives and best practices to improve employee engagement and communications within the Department, including through annual employee surveys, questionnaires, and other communications, as appropriate.

“(3) Monitor efforts of each component to address employee engagement, morale, and communications based on employee feedback surveys, questionnaires, and other communications, as appropriate.

“(4) Advise the Secretary on efforts to improve employee engagement, morale, and communications within specific components and across the Department.

“(5) Conduct regular meetings and report, not less than once per quarter, to the Under Secretary for Management, the head of each component, and the Secretary on Department-wide efforts to improve employee engagement, morale, and communications.

“(b) ACTION PLAN; REPORTING.—The Secretary, acting through the Chief Human Capital Officer, shall—

“(1) not later than 120 days after the date of the establishment of the steering committee under subsection (a), issue a Department-wide employee engagement action plan, establish an employee engagement steering committee established pursuant to subsection (a) and employee feedback provided through annual employee surveys, questionnaires, and other communications in accordance with paragraph (1) of such subsection, to execute strategies to improve employee engagement and communications within the Department; and

“(2) require the head of each component to—

“(A) develop and implement a component-specific employee engagement plan to advance the action plan required under paragraph (1) that includes performance measures, objectives, is measured, and employee feedback provided through annual employee surveys, questionnaires, and other communications in accordance with paragraph (1) of such subsection (a) and employee feedback provided through annual employee surveys, questionnaires, and other communications in accordance with paragraph (1) of such subsection (a);

“(B) ensure that the component engages employees and, where applicable, their labor representatives are to be integrated in developing programs and initiatives;

“(C) monitor progress on implementation of such action plan; and

“(D) provide to the Chief Human Capital Officer and the steering committee quarterly reports on actions planned and progress made under this paragraph.

“(c) TERMINATION.—This section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this section.

“(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 700 the following new item:

“Sec. 710. Employee engagement.”.

“(e) SUBMISSIONS TO COMMITTEE AND ACTION PLAN.—(1) DEPARTMENT-WIDE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department of Homeland Security, shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate the Department-wide employee engagement action plan required under subsection (b)(1) of section 710 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by subsection (a) of this section) not later than 30 days after the issuance of such plan under such subsection (b)(1).

“(2) COMPONENT-SPECIFIC EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PLANS.—Each head of a component of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate the component-specific employee engagement plan of each such component required under subsection (b)(2) of section 710 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by subsection (a) of this section) not later than 30 days after the issuance of such plan under such subsection (b)(2).

SEC. 4. ANNUAL EMPLOYEE AWARD PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341 et seq.), as amended by section 3 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 711. ANNUAL EMPLOYEE AWARD PROGRAM.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may establish an annual employee award program to recognize Department employees or groups of employees for significant contributions to the achievement of the Department’s goals and missions. If such a program is established, the Secretary shall—

“(1) establish within such program categories of awards, each with specific criteria, that emphasizes honoring employees who are at the non-supervisory level;

“(2) publicize within the Department how any employee or group of employees may be nominated for an award;

“(3) establish an internal review board comprised of representatives from Department components, headquarters, and field
personnel to submit to the Secretary award recommendations regarding specific employees or groups of employees:

“(4) select recipients from the pool of nominating the internal new board under paragraph (3) and convene a ceremony at which employees or groups of employees receive such awards from the Secretary and

“(5) publicize such program within the Department.

(b) INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD.—The internal review board described in subsection (a)(3) shall, when carrying out its function under such subsection, consult with representatives from operational components and head of supervising and non-supervisory personnel, and employee labor organizations that represent Department employees.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to authorize additional funds to carry out the requirements in an equitable and consistent manner that results in the same or substantially similar discipline.

(b) CLINICAL AMENDMENT.—(The Table of contents of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended by section 3 of this Act, is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 710 the following new section 711:—

“Sec. 711. Annual employee award program.”

SEC. 5. INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.

(a) In General.—Not more than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act or the issuance of a report by the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security on the extent to which the Department has an equitable and consistent discipline process, whenever is later, but in no case later than one year after such date of enactment, the Comptroller General of the United States shall utilize, if available, such report and investigate whether the application of discipline and adverse actions are administered in an equitable and consistent manner that results in the same or substantially similar discipline outcomes across the Department for misconduct by a non-supervisory or supervisor employee who engages in the same or substantially similar misconduct.

(b) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out the investigation described in subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall consult with the employee engagement steering committee established pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of section 710 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as amended by section 3(a) of this Act).

(c) ACTION BY UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT.—Upon completion of the investigation described in subsection (a), the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security shall review the findings and recommendations of such investigation and implement a plan, in consultation with the employee engagement steering committee established pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of section 710 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, to correct any relevant deficiencies identified by the Comptroller General of the United States. The Under Secretary for Management shall direct the employee engagement steering committee to review such plan to inform committee activities and action plans authorized under such section 710.

SEC. 5. PROHIBITION ON NEW FUNDING.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Such authorizations shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2283. According to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey after 6 straight years of decline, DHS improved by 3 percentage points in 2016, from 53 percent in 2015 to 56 percent. However, since its inception, DHS has consistently reported low employee job satisfaction and today remains last out of large agencies in employee satisfaction.

According to the FEVS, the Department slightly improved its overall response rate to about 50 percent in 2016. Former Secretary Jeh Johnson attributed much of the success to the Department’s employee engagement steering committee and efforts he and other leaders have made in strengthening our morale and engagement.

The purpose of H.R. 2283 is to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to improve morale within the Department of Homeland Security workforce by conferring new responsibilities to the Chief Human Capital Officer, establishing an employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans, and authorizing an annual employee award program.

The security of our homeland depends on focused, efficient, and dedicated individuals who feel confident and empowered in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Thompson for introducing this legislation and for working in such a bipartisan manner on it. I urge all my colleagues to support this commonsense, thoughtful legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2283, the Department of Homeland Security Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, since its inception in 2003, the Department of Homeland Security has faced a number of challenges, one of the most prominent being managing a workforce of more than 240,000 employees.

I am pleased to see that, after 6 straight years of decline, DHS employee engagement and participation scores have improved by 3 percentage points each in the latest Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. However, DHS still ranks amongst the lowest of Federal agencies in employee morale. It has been a personal priority of mine to examine the root cause of DHS’s longstanding employee morale problems and find ways to move the Department in a positive direction.

My legislation, the DHS MORALE Act, does just that by authorizing DHS-wide employee engagement, leadership development, rotational opportunities, as well as an employee engagement steering committee.

Additionally, H.R. 2283 authorizes an annual employee award program to recognize employees who make significant contributions to the Department’s operations.

Finally, H.R. 2283 adds transparency and fairness to DHS’s disciplinary process by directing an independent, Department-wide review of how discipline is applied by components.

This legislation, which is cosponsored by every Democratic member of the committee, has received tremendous support from the labor organization representing the DHS workforce.

I include these letters of support in the Record.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: On behalf of the 80,000 employees at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) represented by the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, I express our union’s support for the DHS Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017, or the DHS MORALE Act.

The DHS MORALE Act recognizes that the contributions of the DHS workers and their unions are essential to addressing serious and sustained morale issues. Each year reports and surveys from the bad state of morale among DHS employees who are on the front lines of national security. Given the diversity in mission, duties, and experience, their direct input is necessary to address issues of importance to their colleagues, including fair treatment and that their voices are heard by management.

Steps to resolve these issues will enable the workforce to better serve the public.

The DHS MORALE Act is a good first step in removing institutions that hamper the workforce that protects the homeland.

APGE supports these efforts.

Sincerely,

J. DAVID COX, SR.,
National President.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCaul AND RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: On behalf of the 80,000 employees at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) represented by the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, I express our union’s support for the DHS Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017, or the DHS MORALE Act.

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APGE supports these efforts.

Sincerely,

J. DAVID COX, SR.,
National President.
forward to improve employee morale amongst Border Patrol Agents.

We are especially pleased that the bill addresses two issues requiring immediate attention, accountability and mobility. An independent audit of DHS disciplinary processes would end DHS’s current penchant for punishing line agents more severely than managers for the same offense. A uniform and transparent system would hold all accountable for violations of law and policy, while also ensuring due process for employees and accountability from the top down.

The proposed Employee Engagement Steering Committee would give line agents another tool to express limitations on issues such as career progression and mobility to CBP management. Too often, newly hired agents are pressed to move from a duty location to another after a few years. Unfortunately, that just isn’t the case. Many are effectively stuck in a location and end up leaving the agency altogether out of frustration. Simply put, the lack of current employee engagement causes a few years. Unfortunately, that just isn’t the case. Many are effectively stuck in a location and end up leaving the agency altogether out of frustration. Simply put, the lack of current employee engagement causes the Border Patrol to lose good agents, and consequently, threatens the security of the border.

I appreciate your leadership to protect the rights of federal employees and look forward to continuing to work with you to find a solution that is acceptable to you and your efforts for and considering our comments.

With kindest regard I am,

BRANDON JUDD
President, National Border Patrol Council

THE NATIONAL TREASURY EMPLOYEES UNION

April 21, 2017.

Hon. BENNIE THOMPSON,
Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representative, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: On behalf of the 25,000 Customs and Border Protection CBP Officers and trade enforcement specialists at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) who are stationed at 328 land, sea and air ports of entry represented by the Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I am writing to thank you for introducing the “Department of Homeland Security Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017” or the “DHS MORALE Act.”

Low morale has been a consistent challenge at DHS. Factors that contribute to low morale are echoed in the 2016 poll conducted. Though DHS has made some gains in 2016, it remains the lowest ranked large agency for employee engagement, and career satisfaction and inclusiveness.

The DHS MORALE Act proposes to improve morale within the DHS workforce by creating a new employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans and authorizing an annual employee award program.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 2283.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The Component heads are tasked with developing and implementing a component-specific action plan that addresses employee engagement and advances the overall Department action plan.

This bill will authorize the Secretary to establish an annual employee awards program to recognize non-supervisory DHS employees who have made significant contributions to the Department.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will also require the Secretary to provide an independent assessment of DHS programs to Congress. Congress must ensure that programs are working in the way that they were created.

This bill is endorsed by the National Border Patrol Council, the National Treasury Employees Union, and the American Federation of Government Employees.

These organizations have recognized that this bill is a step forward in the right direction which helps employees of the Department have a higher morale.

DHS was ranked low in best places to work in a recent poll conducted.

Employee recognition and employee engagement is important to reduce turnover, improve team culture, and increase employee performance.

I urge my colleagues to also support this bill and help create a Department of Homeland Security that is professional, efficient, effective, and employee friendly.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2283, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STREAMLINING DHS OVERHEAD ACT

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2190) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department’s real property portfolio, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2190

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

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Streamlining DHS Overhead Act”.

SEC. 2. LONG TERM REAL PROPERTY STRATEGIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new sections:

SEC. 710. CHIEF FACILITIES AND LOGISTICS OFFICER.

(b) IN GENERAL.—There is a Chief Facilities and Logistics Officer of the Department who shall report directly to the Under Secretary for Management. The Chief Facilities
and Logistics Officer shall be career reserved for a member of the senior executive service.

"(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Chief Facilities and Logistics Officer shall—

"(1) develop and procedures and provide program oversight to manage real property, facilities, personal property, mobile assets, equipment, and other materials of the Department;

"(2) manage and execute, in consultation with the component heads, mission support services within the National Capital Region for real property, facilities, and other common headquarters and field activities for the Department; and

"(3) provide logistical and transactional services for the Department, including transportation, facility operations, and maintenance.

SEC. 71. LONG TERM REAL PROPERTY STRATEGIES.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—

"(1) FIRST STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Under Secretary for Management shall develop an initial 5-year regional real property strategy for the Department that covers the five fiscal years immediately following such date of enactment. Such strategy shall be geographically organized, as directed by the Under Secretary for Management.

"(2) SECOND STRATEGY.—Not later than the first day of the fourth fiscal year covered by the fiscal year paragraph (1), the Under Secretary for Management shall develop a second 5-year real property strategy for the Department that covers the five fiscal years immediately following the conclusion of such first strategy.

"(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

"(1) INITIAL STRATEGY.—The initial 5-year strategy developed in accordance with paragraph (1) of subsection (a) shall—

"(A) identify opportunities to consolidate real property, including the usage of Federal assets, and decrease the number of commercial leases and square footage within the Department’s real property portfolio;

"(B) provide alternate housing and consolidation plans to increase efficiency through joint use of Department spaces while decreasing the cost of leased space;

"(C) identify geographical areas within the region in which the Department’s real property holdings are located and the name of the local government or agency that owns the property;

"(D) examine the establishment of central Department offices and locations and departmental facilities across the Department’s real property holdings, as identified by the Under Secretary for Management; and

"(E) examine the establishment of central Department locations in each such geographical region and the co-location of Department components within the National Capital Region and elsewhere as specified in subsection (f).

"(2) EXCEPTION.—The Under Secretary for Management may grant an exception to the term ‘underutilized space’ if any Federal space or new construction, in accordance with applicable regional real property strategy developed in accordance with subsection (a), and the square foot per person utilization rate for office space and the total number of staff at each such property, and the square foot per person utilization rate for office space (and whether or not such conforms with the workspace standard usable square foot ranges established pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(F)).

"(B) An accounting of all underutilized space (as such term is defined in subsection (e)).

"(C) An accounting of all instances in which the Department or its components consolidated their real property holdings or co-located with another entity within the Department.

"(D) A list of all certifications provided pursuant to subsection (d) and all such certifications approved pursuant to paragraph (3) of this subsection.

"(E) CONGRESSIONAL REPORTING.—The Under Secretary for Management shall annually report to the Committee on Homeland Security and Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and the Inspector General of the Department on the Department’s real property holdings in each region described in the regional strategies developed in accordance with subsection (a), and for each such property, information including the total square footage leased, the total cost, the total number of staff at each such property, and the square foot per person utilization rate for office space (and whether or not such conforms with the workspace standard usable square foot ranges established pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(F)).

"(F) COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES.—

"(1) REGIONAL PROPERTY MANAGERS.—Each component head shall identify a senior career employee of each such component for geographic region included in the regional real property strategies developed in accordance with subsection (a) to serve as each such component’s regional property manager. Each such regional property manager shall serve as a single point of contact for the Under Secretary for Management and other Department components for all real property matters relating to such component, including matters relating to real property space; and any other support necessary for the DHS Regional Mission Support Coordinator strategy and portfolio planning and execution.

"(2) DATA.—Regional property managers for paragraph (1) shall provide annually to the Under Secretary for Management, via a standardized and centralized data system, data on each component’s real property, as specified by the Under Secretary for Management, including relating to underutilized space, and any other support necessary for the DHS Regional Mission Support Coordinator strategy and portfolio planning and execution.

"(g) ONGOING OVERSIGHT.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Management shall monitor components’ adherence to the regional real property strategies developed in accordance with subsection (a) and the implementation policies developed pursuant to subsection (c).

"(2) ANNUAL REVIEW.—The Under Secretary for Management shall annually review the data submitted pursuant to subsection (f) to ensure all underutilized space (as such term is defined in subsection (e)) is properly identified.

"(3) CERTIFICATION REVIEW.—The Under Secretary for Management shall, and if appropriate, approve, component certifications under subsection (d) before such components may make any major real property decision, including matters relating to new leased space, renewing any existing leases, or agreeing to extend or newly occupy any Federal space or new construction, in accordance with the applicable regional real property strategy developed in accordance with subsection (a).
Another important part of this legislation is its outlining of responsibilities for the Chief Facilities and Logistics Officer to achieve cost savings. As we have seen from the 2-year majority staff investigation, increased accountability and promoting efficiency is needed so DHS can more effectively use its resources to focus on its mission of securing the homeland while also saving taxpayer funds.

Improving the Department’s operation and promoting efficiencies within its real property portfolio is an issue that both sides of the aisle and the Department should be able to work together on.

H.R. 2190 is common sense legislation. I urge my colleagues’ support. I reserve the balance of my time.

1915

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2190, the Streamlining DHS Overhead Act. Each year, the Department of Homeland Security spends nearly one-fourth of its entire budget on acquisitions. DHS has a vast and diversified portfolio of assets and real property. Given the importance of these assets to DHS’ mission, it is essential that DHS manage its real property investments efficiently and effectively. This legislation establishes a chief facilities and logistics officer to not only oversee real property, but to seek efficiencies in how the properties are managed.

H.R. 2190 also requires a 5-year regional real property strategy to help decisionmakers pinpoint opportunities to reduce overhead costs through co-location or consolidation efforts. This bipartisan bill was approved unanimously by the Committee on Homeland Security on May 3.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2190, the Streamlining DHS Overhead Act. Despite being the Nation’s third largest Federal department, the Department of Homeland Security continues to struggle with challenges from its integration of 22 different Federal departments and agencies.

One example of these challenges is the Department’s management of its real estate portfolio. DHS pays $2 billion a year to occupy more than 100 million square feet of space. Weak internal oversight and a lack of property management processes have further intensified the problem.

Collaboration and coordination is important in these instances, and doing nothing has led to a footprint larger than what DHS needs to carry out its mission.

This legislation directly addresses these challenges by mandating the development of regional real property strategies that focus on consolidating leases, where appropriate, to the mission. The Under Secretary for Management oversight tools to ensure DHS property is being managed efficiently.

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to recognize George Logothetis, the CEO and chairman of the Libra Group, a private organization based in my congressional district that is dedicated to bolstering local communities through educational and business programs.

George is a visionary who recognizes the value of promoting startup businesses as a catalyst for financial self-sufficiency, economic development, and job creation. In 2015, George created the American Entrepreneurship Award, a nonprofit with one goal in mind: to make free enterprise accessible to every underserved community across our Nation.

This Friday, June 23, George will host AEA’s annual awards ceremony in our home city of Miami, where George will announce the winners of the 2017 Business Plan Competition from Miami and the Bronx. The awardees will receive a cash prize as well as vital consultation and mentorship to get their new business ventures off the ground.

I would like to thank George for his leadership in promoting innovation, and I look forward to his future success, as well as the AEA’s.

THE SENATE’S SECRET HEALTHCARE BILL

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

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Mr. Speaker, the healthcare bill the Senate leadership is writing has not been subjected to any public hearings or debate and, to this day, the contents of the bill remain a secret. This bill is being written by 13 men—Republican men. And because it is being written in secret, only those in the room have a say.

Under normal circumstances, every Senator would have the chance to read and debate a bill, just as we had in the House. But these are not normal circumstances. As that secret committee reshapes our healthcare system behind closed doors, no woman has a seat at the table, no Democrat has a seat at the table, and 77 percent of Americans do not have a Senator at the table.

The Senate leadership has deprived nearly 250 million Americans of representation in the writing of this healthcare bill because they thought no one would notice. They will be proven wrong.

RECOGNIZING ALZHEIMER’S AND BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month. Alzheimer’s is
the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States, and more than 5 million Americans are currently living with it. Every 66 seconds, someone in the United States cultivates the disease.

This disease is not only deadly, but it is also costly. Alzheimer’s, as well as other forms of dementia, cost the Nation roughly $259 billion annually.

Our communities are stepping up. Last year, I joined the Walk 2 End Alzheimer’s event at Target Field, where more than 12,000 people turned out for the event. I have this passion that has led to initiatives like the Alzheimer’s Breakthrough Act, of which I am a co-sponsor. This is an important step in finding a cure through the forming of public-private partnerships to pursue different and new research opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a reflection point—an important reflection point for Alzheimer’s research. The more commitment we put forward, the more progress that we will make in finding a cure. While we have made significant progress, we will not be satisfied until a cure has been found.

RECOGNIZING THE ST. PETE PRIDE PARADE

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

Mr. CRIST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the St. Pete Pride Parade for the significance to Pinellas County, Florida, and our LGBTQ community.

Every June, for the past 15 years, the St. Pete Pride Parade has brightened the streets of my hometown, leaving joy, love, and equality in its wake. It has become one of the largest pride celebrations in the country, hosting over 200,000 attendees last year alone; all possible, thanks to our large, diverse LGBTQ community and city leadership that understands this community as a source of our strength.

As we mark 1 year since the 49 souls were taken from us at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, this pride is much more than a celebration. It is a vibrant act of strength for a community that has endured persecution simply for being who they are and who they love.

As St. Pete looks forward to the celebration this weekend, I wish the community happy pride. Be loud and be proud because we are proud of you.

RECOGNIZING THE PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PAUL LYSKAVA

(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 recognize the professional accomplishments of Paul Lyskava, who has served diligently as the executive director of the Pennsylvania Forest Products Association since 2002.

Paul has been instrumental in working closely with members of the forest products industry. Even through a recession, Paul worked to put the Commonwealth in a good position. Today, Pennsylvania is the leading hardwood lumber producing State in the Nation.

In 2015, Paul was the recipient of the Joseph T. Rothrock Conservationist of the Year Award, which recognizes actions and service that contribute to the continued conservation of Pennsylvania’s forest resources in the spirit of Joseph T. Rothrock, Pennsylvania Forestry Association founder, Joseph T. Rothrock.

Never before has the award been presented to an individual that served in a capacity at all similar to Paul’s. For the 4 years before he took the helm at the Pennsylvania Forest Products Association, Paul served as the executive director of the Pennsylvania Hardwoods Development Council.

On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania, I want to recognize Paul for all he has done for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

We are deeply grateful for your dedication and knowledge, Paul. Thank you, my friend.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

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

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of World Refugee Day.

We are facing the worst refugee crisis in history, with over 65 million refugees; half of them are children.

When I served on Active Duty in the U.S. Air Force, I participated in Operation Pacific Haven. The U.S. military went into northern Iraq. We extracted thousands of Kurdish refugees, brought them to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, and flew most of them to the United States. We saved their lives, and, to this day, the Kurds remain one of America’s strongest allies.

Helping refugees is not only the moral thing to do; it helps our national security. That is why I am honored to introduce bipartisan legislation with Representative ROS-LEHTINEN to promote the health, safety, and well-being of refugees.

LITTLE KIM THE TERRORIST

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, North Korea released Otto Warmbier last week after 17 months of imprisonment and torture. Otto returned home in a coma, never again to speak or see his parents. Yesterday, he died—murdered, actually—from brain damage because of the Korean beatings that he endured.

North Korea had humiliated Otto for allegedly stealing a pro-government placard, forcing him to publicly beg for forgiveness. Now, these are the tactics of terrorists.

We need to ramp up the pressure on North Korea. Three other Americans are still being held in North Korea for apparent political reasons. We must prioritize saving their lives.

And in time to call it like it is: designate North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. Doing so would isolate the country and publicly categorize North Korea with many other rogue nations.

The House has already passed my bill to designate North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. Now the Senate needs to do the same.

Little Kim has American blood on his hands. Give him and his outlaw regime the designation it deserves, a terrorist state.

And that is just the way it is.

TRUMPCARE IS FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, when President Trump calls your healthcare legislation mean and coldhearted, you know that it is time to reconsider your approach to the Nation’s healthcare system. The President was referring, of course, to the House-passed TrumpCare legislation, which pulls the rug from under millions of Americans, raising their costs, gutting their protections, and, for many, taking away their coverage.

And while we do not know the extent of the damage the Senate Republicans’ secret health bill would cause, we do know its consequences would be disastrous. We do know, for instance, that the Senate Republicans plan to gut essential health benefits and destroy the Medicaid expansion.

TrumpCare is fundamentally flawed. Higher costs, less coverage, fewer protections, is that the gift from the Republican Party to the American people. The bill would also destroy millions of jobs—nearly 14,000 jobs in my State of New Jersey next year alone.

TrumpCare is an ugly bill being advanced through an ugly process. Senate Republicans can hide the details from their bill, but they cannot hide that simple fact from the American people.
to be a part of this great tradition in Utica.

In quite an unusual portion of my background, I had the opportunity to spend time in the former Yugoslavia. I also was the sole employee at the former consulate before the tragic war in Yugoslavia, which broke the country up in the early nineties.

As a part of my commitment to and interest in the people from Yugoslavia, I was instrumental in helping bring a huge number of Bosnian refugees to Utica, New York, back in the early nineties and into the late nineties. And I am so pleased that I was able to have the opportunity, with my family business, to create the very first Bosnian newspaper in Utica, known as Mostovi, which means bridges in Bosnian.

Today, the Bosnian refugees make up one of the largest, if not the largest, Bosnian refugee communities in the nation. They have done a wonderful job in Utica in successfully starting businesses and contributing greatly to our community, along with many other refugees.

I just wanted to take this moment to recognize Utica and to thank our tremendous refugees for their contributions to our nation and especially to our community because without them, we would never see the prosperity and the growth that we have seen in our small-business community from their ingenuity and their kindness and their generosity to us.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the United States has been a leader welcoming refugees for decades. Refugees fleeing their shores to escape war, political and religious persecution, and sometimes fear of imminent death. People flee danger seeking refuge and safety. As Americans, we should be the last to perpetuate an environment that causes refugees to live in a state of fear and terror right here in America.

I represent the residents of Clarkston, Georgia. As a refugee resettlement hub, Clarkston is often referred to as the most diverse square mile in America. Clarkston’s refugees have established themselves as taxpayers; they have started thriving businesses; and 91 percent obtain jobs within 6 months of arriving in the U.S. The great diversity and cultural richness that they bring to our communities has made the Fourth District a better place to live, work, and play. Today we show our support for refugees. Today we should all stand to send a message that we will continue our work.

SUPPORT OUR REFUGEES

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New York State, to discuss this dire situation that our taxpayers endure and what our recommended solution is.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I were successful in including in the American Health Care Act a provision which, as of 2020, eliminates the ability of Albany to impose this burden on local homeowners and commercial property taxpayers. It would improve the real estate values in our State. It would be one more reason for people to stay in New York rather than to flee New York.

The thing that I hear from people over and over again in my district, in the 19th District in the Catskills and the Hudson Valley of New York, is their kids and grandchildren are being driven out of State because there are no jobs, and they are being driven out of State by high property taxes.

One of the reasons for those high property taxes is the New York State Medicaid mandate. So, with Mr. Collins, Ms. Tenney, Ms. Zeldin, and Ms. Stefanik, we were successful in including in the American Health Care Act a provision which would, as of 2020, eliminate this burden on local homeowners and require Albany to do what other States, do, which is to take control of its own Medicaid system and not impose these burdens on the counties.

Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, you can see in the 11 counties that I represent in the Mid-Hudson and in the Catskills of New York State, over $2.24 million a year is coming out of homeowners’ pockets, coming out of commercial real estate owners’ pockets and going to pay for Albany’s costs. We are ending that as of 2020 under the proviso in the legislation that I have authored with Mr. Collins, Ms. Tenney, Mr. Reed, Mr. Zeldin, and Ms. Stefanik because we know that this burden on them is unfair and for.

So, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I am delighted at this time to yield to the gentleman from western New York (Mr. Reed), from the Southern Tier.

Mr. REED. Well, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the gentlemen, Mr. Faso and Mr. Collins, for their leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, in my district, the 23rd Congressional District, where we sit on the border of the State of Pennsylvania, we talk a lot about the burden that is placed on my hardworking residents that are struggling, that are trying to pay utility bills, that are trying to pay for food to put on their tables, that are trying to take care of their families and put their kids through school, when you talk about a tax burden that is driven by the Medicaid shift in New York State to the local level, at our county level—a very unique circumstance across the country—to the tune of $145 million a year in the eight counties I represent, that type of burden is not sustainable.

I thank the leadership of Mr. Faso and Mr. Collins for looking for a solution in the American Health Care Act that will alleviate this, that will once and for all shift this burden from our hardworking citizens, our hardworking taxpayers in western New York back to where it belongs: to our State capital, to our State government, that they have mandated, under the Federal Medicaid program, essentially every optional service that is authorized under the program; where you see numbers in New York State where we spend approximately $4,000 per enrollee versus Chas in Medycared, that has invested tremendously in expanding Medycared and Medicaid services, at $2,500; where you see reports that in New York State our average costs are 44 percent, in New York State, under Medicaid spending than the national average.

And then you look at small things that do add up: taxi services that are reimbursed under Medycared in New York State to the tune of $2.20 a mile. If our Governor so chooses to make his colleagues and I worked to include a similar measure in the Affordable Health Care Act, and I urge the Senate and Leader McConnell, to include that measure in their healthcare bill.

The State of New York saddles its residents with the highest overall tax burden in the Nation. A main driver of this hardship remains New York’s persistently exorbitant local property taxes, which are a symptom of irresponsible governing from Albany. Governor Cuomo continues to rely on New York counties to foot the bill for New York State’s outrageous Cadillac Medicaid program; where you see numbers in approximately $470 million a year and my home county of Erie almost $204 million a
They called it the Runway of Tears because the parents were watching their children and grandchildren fly off to Florida, to North Carolina, and to other States where there were jobs and opportunities—the Runway of Tears.

So anything we can do to help reduce that exodus of New York and to let our kids come home and be able to afford to live in New York State, maybe one day again we will be the Empire State.

I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this. Certainly I am going to be fighting side by side with the gentleman and the other New Yorkers to get this through.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his support.

The fact of the matter is that New York has driven away so many people. In my 19th Congressional District, every single county has lost population in the last 5 years. School district populations are down 30, 40 percent. Part of the reason is because of a lack of jobs and high property taxes. What we are simply saying is there should be accountability.

When I ran for office last year, I promised the people of my district that if I was elected, I would do something about that. I hope then people would say: how can the Federal Government get involved in this question?

The reason is because the Federal law authorized the States to impose property taxes on the counties or on the local governments. The fact is that only New York State did it to the degree that New York did. That is why it is going to require us to amend the Federal legislation to preclude New York from doing this.

We are giving Albany 2 1/2 years to reform their program, to eliminate waste, and to make other priorities in its spending. There is no reason for cuts to hospitals or nursing homes, as Governor Cuomo has alleged falsely. What he needs to do is take full responsibility for this program, as most of the Governors in the 49 other States do, and then we will be able to relieve this burden on our local homeowners.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY), who was also elected with me in 2016, for her comments on this important matter.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman Faso for his leadership and also for the great comments from Congressman COLLINS in the western New York district and for coming up with this really great piece of legislation.

It is no secret that New York residents pay among the highest taxes in the Nation. Combined State and local taxes consume over 13 percent of the average household income.

Decades of tax-and-spend policies have deprived the wallets of hardworking middle-class families and forced many small businesses—including family farms; once a tradition in New York—into closure, and driven lifelong residents out of our State in record numbers forever. These burdensome taxes, coupled with crushing regulations, have led to the worst business climate in the country. Small businesses, which create over 70 percent of the new jobs, face the threat of extinction—now.

Year after year, New York continues to be ranked the highest in out-migration in the entire Nation. Nearly 200,000 people have left the Empire State, and two of the worst hit regions—the Mohawk Valley and the North—are located in the 22nd District. Additionally, the two largest cities in our district—Utica and Binghamton—are ranked last and second to last in economic growth.

Hardworking families and our job creators desperately need tax relief. That is why I am working with the New York delegation and the Republican congressional delegation to lead the charge by cosponsoring the Property Tax Reduction Act sponsored by Mr. Faso and Mr. COLLINS and cosponsored by the rest of us.

As a note, I would just like to mention that, as a former member of the State assembly, I did sponsor legislation prior to the type of relief being proposed in this wonderful piece of legislation known as the Property Tax Reduction Act. That legislation was cosponsored in a bipartisan way with Democrats who also recognized the need to change the paradigm in New York State.

The Property Tax Reduction Act will bring the largest local mandate relief initiative to my area in my lifetime, potentially saving the taxpayers in the 22nd District more than $167 million annually in unfunded State Medicaid mandates. This bill relieves county governments from the burden forced upon them by Albany bureaucrats led by our Governor.

In New York State, the law requires approximately $2.3 billion, as was mentioned earlier, that is taken from our local county governments and given to the State for the Medicaid program. This amounts to about $140 million per week.

In 2015, Oneida County was forced to divert more than 80 percent of the property tax levies to subsidize Albany’s bloated budgets. This amounts to $54.4 million annually in Oneida County to cover the cost of their share of Medicaid.

In Broome County, more than half of the county’s $70 million in property tax revenue, about $37 million, was taken from the county last year and diverted to Albany—a loss of more than, as I said, $37 million. This money that would otherwise go to reduce property taxes, fund our schools, make much-needed improvements to infrastructure, and support our first responders, among many other programs, that we need in a county and in a town.

Combined property and sales tax rates as a percentage of value rank many of New York’s counties among...
Albany sits idly by. That is why we are
ration.
lation.
local governments across the State
state New York is in desperate need of
unreasonable Medicaid liability that
years has been shifting part of its Med-
er to spend someone else's money. The old iron
is because Albany was able to spend
New York State’s Medicaid system.

The Property Tax Reduction Act re-
quires Governor Cuomo and the State
to pay its full share of the Medicaid
program that it should be paying in
full and that it also forces on to the
county and local governments.

This bill does not propose cuts to the
programs in the 22nd District. Rather, it
requires Albany to put its fiscal
house in order. It requires Albany to take
money it has been using, sending these unfunded
mandates to our strapped local
governments.

This legislation, as the sponsor has
indicated, gives the State ample
time to realign the budget, to rein in out-of-
control spending, and to give the tax-
payers relief once and for all at the
county level.

If Governor Cuomo chooses to hurt
and waste in the country. If other
States can provide high-quality health
able citizens without taking advantage of local tax-
payers, so can New York. The imposition
of over $2.5 billion in Medicaid
costs on to the counties is nearly seven
times costlier than what counties in
California pay, despite having higher
enrollments and expenditures.

The Property Tax Reduction Act re-
quires Governor Cuomo and the State
to pay its full share of the Medicaid
program that it should be paying in
full and that it also forces on to the
county and local governments.

Mr. FASO. I appreciate the gentle-
woman’s remarks and her strong sup-
port for this reform measure.

I would also point out that a 2015 re-
port from the New York State Com-
troller indicated $531 million in
improper payments on Medicaid
program were identified. In the same re-
port, the Comptroller questioned an ad-
ditional $361 million in transactions
that would require agency actions to
reduce costs or recover funds.

In the past decade, the Office of In-
spector General for the Federal Depart-
ment of Health and Human Services
found 10 specific instances in which
New York State received improper
Federal Medicaid payments in excess of
$50 million, with six of those instances
exceeding over $170 million apiece.

So there is a lot of room in the New
York State Medicaid program to
reduce improper payments and outright
fraud that we have seen. I know my
colleagues, Mr. STEFANIK and Ms.
TENNEY, from her experience in the State
legislature, has

The Property Tax Reduction Act requires Governor Cuomo and the State to pay its full share of the Medicaid program that it should be paying in full and that it also forces on to the county and local governments. This bill does not propose cuts to the programs in the 22nd District. Rather, it requires Albany to put its fiscal house in order. It requires Albany to take money it has been using, sending these unfunded mandates to our strapped local governments. This legislation, as the sponsor has indicated, gives the State ample time to realign the budget, to rein in out-of-control spending, and to give the taxpayers relief once and for all at the county level.

If Governor Cuomo chooses to hurt and waste in the country. If other States can provide high-quality health care to all, Albany spends over $8 billion in wood filmmakers in the last 2 years. In fact, let’s just take a look at a promise employment. Almost $1.3 billion of tax money was spent on these programs in the 22nd District. Rather, this bill does not propose cuts to the programs. Rather, it requires Albany to pay its full share of the Medicaid program that it should be paying in full and that it also forces on to the county and local governments.

This bill does not propose cuts to the programs in the 22nd District. Rather, it requires Albany to put its fiscal house in order. It requires Albany to take money it has been using, sending these unfunded mandates to our strapped local governments. This legislation, as the sponsor has indicated, gives the State ample time to realign the budget, to rein in out-of-control spending, and to give the taxpayers relief once and for all at the county level.

If Governor Cuomo chooses to hurt the citizens by slashing programs that upstate New Yorkers want and need with a mammoth State budget that was over $152 billion this year for fiscal year 2017, that is his choice, not something that has been brought on by that act. His failed leadership continues to produce budgets laden with unconstitu-
tional executive pork and wasteful spending.

In fact, let’s just take a look at a couple of the items. Over $370 million in Albany’s budget these past few years was spent on the corrupt and mis-
managed StartUP New York program, which produced only one-third of the promised jobs. Over $1.3 billion in tax breaks have been handed over to Holly-
dozen of corny projects that have failed. In all, Albany spends over $8 billion in taxpayer money on a job-creation pro-
gram with little results to show for it.

The bill will simply force the State to work over a period of several years to responsibly reduce the unfair and unreasonable Medicaid liability that has been imposed on our counties. Upstate New York is in desperate need of property tax relief.

This bill is the first step in making
the relief a reality. County executives and
local governments across the State have voiced their support of this legis-
lation.

While hardworking families struggle, Albany sits idly by. That is why we are

level, because it has been a struggle for all of us through many years. Having this come to reality is going to be, honestly, one of the greatest mandates relief packages that I have experienced in my lifetime, and I am grateful.

Mr. FASO. I thank the gentlewoman for her comments.

I would close, Mr. Speaker, simply by pointing out that New York State has among, depending on what the measure is, either the highest or second highest real property taxes in the entire Nation. We are the only State that imposes this type of burden on local homeowners, local property taxpayers.

If you look at the gross amount that people pay in their real estate taxes, the downstate counties—Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland—pay the highest in gross amount. But if you calculate the property tax burden as a percentage of the home value, the counties in upstate New York; in western New York; along the southern tier; in the Mohawk Valley, where Ms. TAYLOR lives; in the Catskills and Mid-Hudson, where I live; and in the Adirondacks, which Ms. STEFANIK represents, those counties are being crushed. Those homeowners are being crushed by the burden of real estate taxes.

A large part of that reason is this 50-year mandate that started under Nelson Rockefeller, where I was born, which has been imposed on New York homeowners, which is crushing them, driving them out of their homes, and this is what we are intending to stop.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support of my colleagues here tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of flight diverted for medical reasons.

Mr. CORREA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of flight diverted for medical reasons.

Mr. CUMMINGS (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for June 12 through 23.

Ms. GABBARD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today through June 23.

## SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 782. An act to reauthorize the National Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

## ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 21, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

## EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker, as follows:

1714. A letter from the Acting Secretary of Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the 2016 Armed Forces Retirement Home Accreditation Report, Sec. 2120 (110 Stat. 814; as amended by Public Law 110-181, Sec. 1422(c); (122 Stat. 422); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1715. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 22-70, “Early Learning Equity in Funding Amendment Act of 2017”, pursuant to Public Law 93-196, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1716. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 22-71, “Child Development Facilities Regulations Amendment Act of 2017”, pursuant to Public Law 93-196, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1717. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 22-72, “Child Care Study Act of 2017”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1718. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Airworthiness Directives: Airbus Airplanes [DOcket No.: FAA-2016-5034; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-494-AD; Amendment 39-18891; AD 2017-10-17] (RIN: 2120-1AA4) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 988); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1719. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Airworthiness Directives: Zodiac Seats California LLC Seating [DOcket No.: FAA-2016-5985; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-675-AD; Amendment 39-18957; AD 2017-10-09] (RIN: 2120-1AA4) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 988); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1720. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Airworthiness Directives: Diamond Aircraft Industries GmbH Airplanes [DOcket No.: FAA-2017-5055; Directorate Identifier 2017-NM-247-AD; Amendment 39-19071; AD 2017-09-08] (RIN: 2120-1AA4) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 988); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1721. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Airworthiness Directives: Rolls-Royce plc Turboprop Engines [DOcket No.: FAA-2017-0114; Directorate Identifier 2017-NM-519-AD; Amendment 39-19107; AD 2017-11-06] (RIN: 2120-1AA4) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 988); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1722. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Airworthiness Directives: The Boeing Company Airplanes [DOcket No.: FAA-2017-5197; Directorate Identifier 2017-NM-415-AD; Amendment 39-19217; AD 2017-11-11] (RIN: 2120-1AA4) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 988); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1723. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Airworthiness Directives: Airbus Airplanes [DOcket No.: FAA-2016-6799; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-402-AD; Amendment 39-18988; AD 2017-10-23] (RIN: 2120-1AA4) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 988); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1724. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Airworthiness Directives: Airbus Airplanes [DOcket No.: FAA-2016-6799; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-402-AD; Amendment 39-18988; AD 2017-10-23] (RIN: 2120-1AA4) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 988); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.
H.R. 2940. A bill to allow Members of Congress to carry a concealed handgun anywhere in the United States, with exceptions; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 2941. A bill to provide for the conveyance of Kisatchie National Forest in the United States, with certain exceptions; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture.

H.R. 2942. A bill to prohibit the conditioning of any permit, lease, or other use on the transfer of any water right to the United States; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

H.R. 2943. A bill to provide grants for projects to acquire land and water for parks and other outdoor recreation purposes and to allow States to establish, expand, and operate outdoor recreation facilities; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

H.R. 2944. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for in-State tuition rates for refugees and asylees; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

H.R. 2945. A bill to grant Members of Congress the right to carry a firearm anywhere in the United States, except in the United States Capitol; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 2946. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on temporary license for loan originators; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 2947. A bill to require depositary institutions are subject to the Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975 to specify which forms of transaction are subject to requirements of such Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

H.R. 2948. A bill to support the establishment or expansion of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 2949. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to authorize borrowers to separate joint consolidation loans; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

H.R. 2950. A bill to amend section 2003d of title 54, United States Code, to ensure that amounts are made available for projects to provide recreational public access, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

H.R. 2951. A bill to allow Members of Congress to carry a concealed handgun anywhere in the United States, with exceptions; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, and Homeland Security, 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.

H.R. 2952. A bill to support the establishment or expansion of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 2956. A bill to provide for parental notification and intervention in the case of an unmarried minor seeking an abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 2957. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to provide for...
enhanced payments to rural health care providers under the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition, to the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Budget, 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. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mr. BARRAGAN, Ms. LEE, Mr. QUIKLEY, Ms. DELAUBO, Mr. POLIS, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. ELLISON, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO):

H. RES. 394. A resolution to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to increase the minimum wage shall apply to American Samoa and to provide that any further increases in such minimum wage shall be determined by the Secretary of Labor; to the Committee on Education and the Workplace.

By Mr. SIRES, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. McGovern, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. SERRANO, and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H. RES. 395. A resolution reaffirming the leadership of the United States in promoting the safety, health, and well-being of refugees and displaced persons; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York introduced a bill (H.R. 2971) for the relief of Martin Martinez; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. WESKERMAN:

H. R. 2368. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mr. LABOED:

H. R. 2937. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H. R. 2938. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. TIPPTON:

H. R. 2926. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. BROOKS of Alabama:

H. R. 2940. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article II, Section 2, Clause 2

By Mr. ABRAHAM:

H. R. 2941. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution of the United States.

By Ms. DELAUBO:

H. R. 2942. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. BARRAGAN:

H. R. 2943. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2. "The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular state."

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Article I, Section 8: “To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.”

By Mr. HUFFMAN: H.R. 2955.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: 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. JODY B. HICE of Georgia: H.R. 2965.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have Power “To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States.’’

The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution which states that “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

By Mr. LaMALFA: H.R. 2966.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8, Clause 1, of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. DUNN: H.R. 2974.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. STIVERS: H.R. 2948.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina: H.R. 2949.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

As described in Article I, Section 1, “all legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.”

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution provides Congress with the authority to “provide for the common defense and general welfare” of Americans. In the Department of Education Organization (P.L. 96–68), Congress declared that “the establishment of a Department of Education is in the public interest, will promote the general welfare of the United States, and will enable the Federal Government to coordinate its educational activities more effectively.” The Department of Education’s mission is to “promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.”

By Mr. PEARCE: H.R. 2950.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have the power to . . . make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or officer thereof.

By Mr. RABIN: H.R. 2951.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Amendment 2: A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Article 1, Section 5–2: Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrency of two thirds, expel a Member.

By Ms. BASS: H.R. 2942.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 allows Congress to make all laws “which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution” any “other” powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States.

By Mr. BURGESS: H.R. 2953.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8, Clause 1: 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, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. EMMER: H.R. 2954.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. ENGEL: H.R. 2955.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. GOMMERT: H.R. 2956.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The Congress shall have Power . . . to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers . . .

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio: H.R. 2957.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri: H.R. 2957.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 1 (General Welfare) and Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (Commerce) of the Constitution.

The bill makes several changes to the way hospitals are regulated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This includes transaction between hospitals, CMS, and third parties, which constitutes commerce. Further, Medicare is considered to be constitutional as part of providing for the general welfare and therefore any changes to Medicare would fall under this provision as well.

By Mr. TIED LIEU of California: H.R. 2958.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3 of the Constitution

By Mr. BEN RAY LIJAN of New Mexico: H.R. 2959.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 1 of the Constitution

By Ms. MENG: H.R. 2960.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. NORCROSS: H.R. 2961.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. NORTON: H.R. 2962.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes:” as enumerated in Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. RADEWAGEN: H.R. 2964.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ROSS: H.R. 2965.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. RUSH: H.R. 2966.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. TAKANO: H.R. 2969.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. VELEZ-ZQUEZ: H.R. 2970.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have Power to . . . provide for the . . . general Welfare of the United States.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York: H.R. 2971.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. KENNEDY:

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 15: Mr. KENNEDY.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill Numbers</th>
<th>Sponsors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 545:</td>
<td>Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Miss GONZALEZ-BAKER, Mr. AMODEI and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 535:</td>
<td>Mr. BARDY of Pennsylvania, Ms. MOORE.</td>
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<td>H.R. 538:</td>
<td>Mr. KIM, Mr. MILLER, and Mr. FABENHOLD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 546:</td>
<td>Mrs. DENHAM and Mr. ZELDIN.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 547:</td>
<td>Mr. SMITH of Texas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 548:</td>
<td>Mr. SCHWARTZ, Mr. ATKINSON, and Mr. JONES.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 550:</td>
<td>Mr. BURD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 551:</td>
<td>Mr. DUNN.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 553:</td>
<td>Ms. AXTLE.</td>
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<td>H.R. 554:</td>
<td>Mr. HUTCHINSON.</td>
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<td>H.R. 555:</td>
<td>Mr. POLIS.</td>
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<td>H.R. 556:</td>
<td>Mr. COOK.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 557:</td>
<td>Mr. ROWLEY, Mr. CARSON of Minnesota, and Mr. BASS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 558:</td>
<td>Mr. McPHERSON.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 559:</td>
<td>Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. EVANS, Mr. MULCAHY, and Mr. NOEM.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 560:</td>
<td>Mr. GUSTAFSON.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 561:</td>
<td>Ms. BISHOP of New York.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 562:</td>
<td>Mr. McPHERSON.</td>
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<td>H.R. 563:</td>
<td>Mr. MCCLURE.</td>
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<td>H.R. 564:</td>
<td>Mr. CRAVER of North Carolina, Mr. MCKEAN, and Mr. RAMIREZ.</td>
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<td>H.R. 565:</td>
<td>Mr. SANDERS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 566:</td>
<td>Mr. BROWN of Ohio.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R. 567:</td>
<td>Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. COLE, and Mr. CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE H4995 202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2909, the Reducing Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

Offered by Mr. Brady of Texas

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2911, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

Offered by Mr. Brady of Texas

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2918, the Messier and Mr. Franks of Arizona.

H.R. 2924: Mr. Lynch.

H.R. 2920: Mrs. Napolitano.


H.J. Res. 51: Ms. Tiberi, Mr. Veila, Mr. Coffman, Mr. MacArthur, Mr. Sessions, and Ms. Gonzalez of Texas.

H. Con. Res. 28: Mr. Dent.

H. Con. Res. 37: Mr. Jones.

H. Con. Res. 45: Mr. Young of Iowa.

H. Con. Res. 57: Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, Mr. Shimkus, Mr. Harris, Mr. Sam Johnson of Texas, and Mr. Frank of Arizona.

H. Res. 59: Mr. McCintock.


H. Res. 15: Mr. Bera, Mrs. Demings, and Mr. Marshall.

H. Res. 30: Mr. Katko.

H. Res. 129: Mr. Foster and Mr. Turner.

H. Res. 185: Mr. Kinzinger, Mr. Engel, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Mr. Donovan, Ms. Frankel of Florida, Mr. Sires, Mr. Webster of Florida, Mr. Zeldin, and Mr. Yoho.

H. Res. 188: Mr. Polis.

H. Res. 218: Mr. Burgess.

H. Res. 220: Ms. Meng, Mr. Ryan of Ohio, and Mr. Deutch.

H. Res. 232: Mr. Pallone, Mr. Wehr of Texas, Mr. Clay, and Mr. Hultgren.

H. Res. 257: Mr. Moore.

H. Res. 276: Ms. Meng, Mr. Foster, and Ms. Granger.

H. Res. 313: Mr. Lawson of Florida.

H. Res. 317: Mr. Lamborn, Mr. Coffman, Mr. Wilson of South Carolina, and Mr. Raskin.

H. Res. 318: Mrs. Norm.

H. Res. 319: Mr. King of Iowa.

H. Res. 332: Mr. Huffman.

H. Res. 335: Mr. Ellison.

H. Res. 359: Ms. Meng, Mr. Poe of Texas, Mr. Hartings, and Mr. Foster.

H. Res. 390: Mr. Ruiz, Mr. Norcross, Mr. Neal, Ms. Hanabusa, Mr. McNerney, Mr. Castro of Texas, Mr. Sires, Mrs. Beatty, and Mr. Jeffries.

H.R. 2997: Mr. Geer of Texas and Mr. Hultgren.

H.R. 2998: Mr. DeFazio.

H.R. 2999: Mr. Gohmert, Mr. Yoho, Mr. Posey, Mr. Brat, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Poe of Texas, Mr. Basin, and Mr. DisSarlaas.

H.R. 2991: Mr. Coffman, Mr. Cuellar, Miss Gonzalez-Colon of Puerto Rico, Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Espallat, Ms. Roybal-Allard, Mr. Sires, and Mr. Correa.

H.R. 2918: Mr. Messier and Mr. Franks of Arizona.

H.R. 2881: Mr. Donnelly, Mr. Byrne, and Mr. Hensarling.

H.R. 2740: Mr. Beyer, Ms. Meng, Mr. Sires, Mr. Webster of Florida, Mr. Zeldin, and Mr. Yoho.

H.R. 2742: Ms. Bass, Mr. Cortz of Indiana, Mrs. Lawrence, and Mr. Al Green of Texas.

H.R. 2747: Mr. Meadows.

H.R. 2756: Mr. PoCans, Mr. Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico, Ms. Kaptur, and Mrs. Watson Coleman.

H.R. 2763: Miss Gonzalez-Colon of Puerto Rico.

H.R. 2771: Mr. Coffman.

H.R. 2777: Mr. Lipinski.

H.R. 2790: Mr. Coffman, Mr. Himes, Mr. Soto, Mr. Gene Green of Texas, Mr. Connolly, Mr. Ellison, Mr. Peters, Ms. Long, Mr. Gottthimer, Mr. Schiff, and Mr. DeFazio.

H.R. 2797: Mr. O’Halloran and Mr. Harper.

H.R. 2822: Ms. Sinema.

H.R. 2826: Mr. Burgess.

H.R. 2834: Mr. Al Green of Texas and Mr. Kilmir.

H.R. 2840: Mr. DeFazio.

H.R. 2842: Mr. Sessions.

H.R. 2845: Mr. Barbagian.

H.R. 2851: Mr. Sensenbrenner.

H.R. 2854: Mr. Levin, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, and Mr. Nadler.

H.R. 2858: Mr. Polis.

H.R. 2870: Mr. Trott.

H.R. 2877: Mr. Evans.

H.R. 2878: Mr. Doggett.

H.R. 2881: Mr. Long.

H.R. 2886: Ms. Norton, Ms. Kaptur, and Mr. Sires.

H.R. 2808: Mr. Cicilline, Ms. Tsongas, Mr. Fosters, Mr. Rush, Mr. Connolly, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Price of North Carolina, Mr. Crowley, Ms. Barayag, Mr. Carahal, Mr. Wasserman Schultz, and Ms. Hanabusa.

H.R. 2099: Mr. Gohmert, Mr. Yoho, Mr. Posey, Mr. Brat, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Poe of Texas, Mr. Basin, and Mr. DisSarlaas.

H.R. 2111: Mr. Coffman, Mr. Cuellar, Miss Gonzalez-Colon of Puerto Rico, Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Espallat, Ms. Roybal-Allard, Mr. Sires, and Mr. Correa.

H.R. 2918: Mr. Messier and Mr. Franks of Arizona.

H.R. 2824: Mr. Lynch.

H.R. 2920: Mrs. Napolitano.


H.J. Res. 51: Mr. Tiberi, Mr. Veila, Mr. Coffman, Mr. MacArthur, Mr. Sessions, and Mr. Gonzalez of Texas.

H. Con. Res. 28: Mr. Dent.

H. Con. Res. 37: Mr. Jones.

H. Con. Res. 45: Mr. Young of Iowa.

H. Con. Res. 57: Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, Mr. Shimkus, Mr. Harris, Mr. Sam Johnson of Texas, and Mr. Frank of Arizona.

H. Con. Res. 59: Mr. McCintock.


H. Res. 15: Mr. Bera, Mrs. Demings, and Mr. Marshall.

H. Res. 30: Mr. Katko.

H. Res. 129: Mr. Foster and Mr. Turner.

H. Res. 185: Mr. Kinzinger, Mr. Engel, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Mr. Donovan, Ms. Frankel of Florida, Mr. Sires, Mr. Webster of Florida, Mr. Zeldin, and Mr. Yoho.

H. Res. 188: Mr. Polis.

H. Res. 218: Mr. Burgess.

H. Res. 220: Ms. Meng, Mr. Ryan of Ohio, and Mr. Deutch.

H. Res. 232: Mr. Pallone, Mr. Wehr of Texas, Mr. Clay, and Mr. Hultgren.

H. Res. 257: Mr. Moore.

H. Res. 276: Ms. Meng, Mr. Foster, and Ms. Granger.

H. Res. 313: Mr. Lawson of Florida.

H. Res. 317: Mr. Lamborn, Mr. Coffman, Mr. Wilson of South Carolina, and Mr. Raskin.

H. Res. 318: Mrs. Norm.

H. Res. 319: Mr. King of Iowa.

H. Res. 332: Mr. Huffman.

H. Res. 335: Mr. Ellison.

H. Res. 359: Ms. Meng, Mr. Poe of Texas, Mr. Hartings, and Mr. Foster.

H. Res. 390: Mr. Ruiz, Mr. Norcross, Mr. Neal, Ms. Hanabusa, Mr. McNerney, Mr. Castro of Texas, Mr. Sires, Mrs. Beatty, and Mr. Jeffries.

H.R. 2847: the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

Offered by Mr. Brady of Texas

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2831, the Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

Offered by Mr. Brady of Texas

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

Offered by Mr. Brady of Texas

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2857, the Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

Offered by Mr. Brady of Texas

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2866, the Reducing Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

The amendment to be offered by Representative LaMAfia, or a designee, to H.R. 1654 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.
The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

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

Let us pray.

Gracious Lord, who has given us life, we praise You for Your faithful reliability.

Bless our lawmakers today in the work they will do. May they seek in all their labors to please and glorify You as You fill them with Your grace. May they not become weary in doing what is right, knowing that in due season they will reap if they faint not.

Lord, let Your peace flood their hearts and help them to realize that it is by Your permission that they will breathe their next breath. May they permit life’s problems to make them more dependent on Your guidance and strength.

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. Sasse). The majority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION
Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we have been debating ObamaCare’s failures and what to do about them for so many years now. We have heard so many distress stories from constituents who have been hurt. Thankfully, the Senate will soon have the chance to turn the page on this failed law.

As I said yesterday, the entire Senate Republican conference has been active and engaged on legislation to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare for quite some time. We have had many productive discussions on the way forward. We are united in our belief that the American people deserve better than ObamaCare’s unsustainable status quo.

While it is disappointing that our Democratic colleagues decided early on that they didn’t want to work seriously with us on finding solutions, Senate Republicans remain focused on the following: stabilizing insurance markets, which are collapsing under ObamaCare; improving the affordability of health insurance, which is spiking under ObamaCare; freeing Americans from ObamaCare’s mandates, which force them to buy insurance they don’t want; strengthening Medicaid for those who need it the most; and preserving access to care for patients with preexisting conditions.

Insurance markets are collapsing under ObamaCare. We want to stabilize them. ObamaCare’s champions said that the law would bring more healthcare choices, but for far too many, just the opposite has occurred.

In the years since ObamaCare’s passage, we have read story after story about co-ops collapsing, insurers fleeing, families losing the plans they didn’t like, and trusted doctors and hospitals slipping out of reach.

Today ObamaCare is nearing full collapse. Americans in nearly one of every two counties could find themselves left with just one option under ObamaCare next year—which of course really isn’t a choice at all—or even worse, find themselves without any option, period.

This long-term ObamaCare trend is not sustainable. We have to act, and we are.

Healthcare costs are spiking under ObamaCare. We want to improve affordability. ObamaCare’s champions said that the law would make healthcare more affordable, but for too many just the opposite has occurred.

In the years since ObamaCare’s passage, we have received so many calls and letters from families who have been hit with soaring out-of-pocket costs and skyrocketing premiums. In fact, a recent Health and Human Services report showed that premiums in the individual market rose by an average of 105 percent. The law was fully implemented in 2013.

Today the situation continues to spiral out of control. Americans in States across the country could find themselves facing more double-digit premium increases next year—as high as 30 percent. Another recent report found that nearly 2 million Americans who selected an ObamaCare plan ended up canceling their coverage after just a few weeks, and the most common reason they cited for doing so was that it was too expensive. This long-term ObamaCare trend is not sustainable.

Americans are being forced to buy insurance they don’t want under ObamaCare. We want to free them from that mandate. When ObamaCare’s champions pushed their health law on the American people, they enacted onerous mandates that forced too many families into plans they didn’t like or couldn’t afford. In the years since ObamaCare’s passage, we heard from Americans who decided it was simply more affordable for them to take their chance and pay the fine and go without insurance altogether.

Today ObamaCare’s collapse is making the situation even more unfair. Insurance markets are collapsing, leaving Americans with fewer options. Health costs are spiking, making many of the remaining options even more expensive. That means Americans could...
be left trapped, forced by law to purchase ObamaCare insurance but left without the means to do so. This long-term ObamaCare trend is not sustainable. We have to act, and we are.

These are just a few of the major areas that Senate Republicans are focused on as we continue working on legislative solutions to move away from ObamaCare. In doing so, we will also work toward strengthening Medicaid and preserving access to care for patients with preexisting conditions—two areas of concern for many across the Nation.

I regret that Democrats announced early on that they did not want to be part of a serious bipartisan process to move past the failures of this law. Their ObamaCare law is collapsing all around us. It is hurting Americans. It will continue to hurt even more if we allow the unsustainable status quo to continue. So we have a responsibility to act, and Senate Republicans are working together, guided by the principles I mentioned, and acting on behalf of Americans, who deserve better than the status quo, better than continuing the pain of ObamaCare.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Mandelker nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we continue to make progress on legislation to clean up the mess left by the meltdown of ObamaCare, at least insofar as it affects the lives of millions of people who buy their insurance on the individual markets. These are individuals and small businesses that don’t have the benefit of large employer healthcare plans, and they have been devastated by ObamaCare.

This is why ObamaCare is collapsing for millions of people, and we have to act in the interest of countless families and small businesses that are suffering tremendous harm.

I have told this myself: others have likewise told the stories. We have seen those reported in the media. For many people, healthcare costs, their insurance premiums are skyrocketing. We also know that because of the distortion in the insurance markets, many insurance companies are simply pulling out of counties and States around the country, so people have no choices when it comes to purchasing their healthcare on the exchanges. Of course, many people continue to lose access to their doctors.

We need to contrast this with what was promised when ObamaCare was passed. I know it sounds repetitive, but I am afraid that if we lose sight of what the promises were with ObamaCare, we will actually calculate the tremendous harm and the deception that was involved in actually delivering on that promise.

President Obama said that if you liked your policy, you could keep it—true. He also said you could keep your doctor—also true. He also said that a family of four could see an average decrease in premiums of $2,500 a year—also not true.

What is the response of our Democratic friends? We saw last night that they took to the Senate floor, and they gave impassioned speeches.

First of all, they criticized the Republicans for coming forward to try to rescue people being hurt by the failures of ObamaCare. They criticized us for that. Then they said that it was a secret bill after they had rejected every entreaty—every request—for them to work with us on a bipartisan basis to rescue the people who are being hurt by the failures of ObamaCare. They rejected that.

What did they do? They came to the Senate floor. They said that they hate it because they know it is right, a 105-percent increase—is that right, a 105-percent increase—is going to go up 20 percent or more next year unless we come to the rescue of those who are being harmed by ObamaCare.

We would say to our Democratic colleagues: Please do not wear yourselves out by doing something that is going to accomplish nothing. Channel all of your energy and this passion into trying to do something that will actually help the people who are being hurt today by the failures of ObamaCare.

They went even further. They said, well, they may decide just to obstruct the Senate’s business on other matters that are not healthcare related until they can see the bill, which they will get to see soon.

As soon as we see the final product, we will get it scored by the Congressional Budget Office. Then we will have, literally, a vote-arama, where there will be an opportunity to debate in a fulsome and comprehensive sort of way and an opportunity to offer dozens—if not hundreds—of amendments to the bill, and we will vote. We will vote, as that is what we do.

There is nothing happening in secret here. In the fullness of time, we will all see the product we have been working on. As a result of their refusal to work with us, we have waited on it the best we can to try to accomplish something better than the failed status quo of ObamaCare.

We are told that they may obstruct the Senate’s other business, including committee work. That is unrelated to the healthcare debate but, I guess, is just their lashing out in trying to find some way that they can make life a little more difficult here in the Senate with regard to our accomplishing other important work as well.

I happen to serve on the Senate Intelligence Committee. One of the things that we are doing is a comprehensive investigation of Russia’s active measures undertaken during the last election. We have a committee meeting this afternoon.

Are Democrats really going to obstruct the Senate Intelligence Committee’s work in conducting and completing its investigation into Russian activities in the 2016 election? Are they really going to do that? It strikes me as nuts.

On Thursday, for example, we also have a Judiciary Committee meeting that is scheduled to consider a critically important bill that I introduced with our colleague from Minnesota, Senator KLOBUCHAR, to help fight human trafficking.

Are Democrats going to obstruct our ability to conduct our business and block our consideration of bills involving human trafficking and providing relief for the victims?

This bill reauthorizes key programs that support survivors, and it provides
addition resources to Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials who are on the frontlines of fighting this heinous crime.

Will the Democratic leader from New York jeopardize the committee’s ability to act or consider and pass this law? Does he plan to block a Member of his own political party from advancing her bill to fight human trafficking as well?

This strikes me as wrong for a number of reasons. I think it would actually be appalling if our Democratic colleagues, out of their frustration—frankly, borne out of their failure to do their job and work with us to find a solution to the meltdown of ObamaCare—lashed out in a way that affected victims of human trafficking and affected the Senate’s ability to conduct its investigation into the Russian activities involved in our election.

Now is not the time to grandstand and make damaging, symbolic gestures like this. But it appears our Democratic colleagues talked a lot last night, we did not hear anything from them about the current realities of ObamaCare and how it has failed the American people. They seem to be wholly to their own side. We did not hear anything about rising costs or the lack of choices.

I talked to one of my Democratic colleagues this morning. He told me that his own son was looking at $7,500 premium in a year and at a $5,000 deductible. This friend, a Democrat—and I will not reveal his name because I do not think it would be appropriate to do so—told me that his own son had to spend $12,500 out of pocket before his insurance actually kicked in. That is a disaster, not just for his son but for millions of people who are negatively affected by ObamaCare. Yet our friends across the aisle want to flail about and threaten to block trafficking legislation without examination into the Russian involvement in the election.

The only thing they have not done is offer a constructive alternative. That is the only thing they have not done. They have tried everything else. You know why, of course. It is that we know what the alternative is.

Basically, they did ObamaCare all by themselves. I remember. I was here on the Senate floor, in 2010, on Christmas Eve. I think it was at about 7:30 in the morning when we had the vote out of the Senate on what passed. ObamaCare was a pure party-line vote. So the Democrats have had it all to themselves—the ability to design a healthcare system that they thought America should have. It has failed time and again.

Do you know what their current proposal is right now? It is a single-payer option that puts our country even more in debt and that we know does not work.

The reason we know it does not work is that it will, no doubt, emulate things like the British National Health Service, which has resulted in two-tiered healthcare—healthcare for people who cannot otherwise afford to pay out of their pockets to get better healthcare, with all of the problems of government-run healthcare added to it, but far-left elements of the Democratic Party want a plan that goes even further. I believe that could ultimately be their goal—one that would increase government spending on healthcare by $538.9 billion just this year, ballooning to $6.6 trillion between 2017 and 2026, according to the Urban Institute.

Take a look at the State of California, where a similar proposal—a single-payer system—was pushed at the State level there to enact a single-payer system that would add $400 billion each year to the California State budget. I think that is roughly double the amount of the whole budget for the State of California—$400 billion each year.

It strikes me that at least one conclusion you might draw from this is that our Democratic friends’ solution, rather than trying to work with us in a bipartisan way to save people who are being hurt from the failures of ObamaCare, is to say: Let’s throw more money at the problem. That, I believe, is the only thing they have not done.

What it will do is add to our national debt without solving the healthcare problem, and it will further burden future generations who will have to pay that money back at some point.

We are about $20 trillion in national debt. These young people up here who are serving as pages are going to have to deal with that, I guess, unless we have the courage to do it ourselves. It strikes me as profoundly immoral for us to spend the money today and say: Well, our kids and grandkids are going to have to pay it back later. That is immoral.

If we thought ObamaCare crushed any semblance of competition in the market, then a single-payer plan like the one we are considering today is like under ObamaCare.

What suits their needs, not what government-approved healthcare is like under ObamaCare. It is $695 a year now—instead of buying the government-approved healthcare, what suits their needs, not what government is going to force you to buy, and if you do not buy the government-approved plan, it is going to punish you by fining you. That is what the status quo is like under ObamaCare.

ObamaCare is so bad that, currently, we have almost 30 million people who are still uninsured. About 6.5 million of them simply pay the penalty—I think it is $295 a year to a fine—instead of buying the government-approved healthcare plan. They figure that paying the penalty is better than buying the insurance for them. Then there are others—millions more—who simply opt out because of hardship. If the goal of ObamaCare were universal coverage, it has failed that goal as well. So we need to stabilize the market.

Secondly, we need to address ObamaCare’s skyrocketing premiums and co-pays. We all know that if ObamaCare stays in place, premiums will stand only to rise for consumers. That is something I think our friends across the aisle are missing as well.
Doing nothing is not an option because people are going to be even more priced out of the marketplace, assuming they can find an insurance company to sell them healthcare.

In Texas, a Houston-area insurer has asked for a 16 percent annual rate hike for its 2018 ObamaCare coverage, a coverage for which they didn’t want to raise premiums or they have to quit the market.

The second thing we need to do is this. Remember, the first thing I said is stabilize the market. The second is attack premiums to bring them down, and the third thing we need to do is make sure we continue to protect American citizens from preexisting conditions. This is something I think everybody believes that needs to happen, without regard to political or ideological affiliation, or whether you’re from the Democratic party or the Republican party the problem that people have with the way the health insurance works is because they have a preexisting condition, and we want to preserve those protections. That is the third goal.

The fourth goal is to make Medicaid, which is the medical safety net for millions of people, sustainable into the future. Right now we know it is not sustainable, like our other entitlement programs. The way we want to do that is by giving States more flexibility. We want to have the rug pulled out from under them, and we want to make sure that it continues to grow year after year, but at a sustainable rate.

Right now, there is no cap, no rate of increase provided. So it is an unlimited entitlement. One of the suggestions from the House bill is to grow it each year at the rate of the consumer price index for medical costs; that is, medical inflation plus 1 percent. In other words, more money would be spent next year than this year. Even more money than next year will be spent the following year and so on, but it will be done at a sustainable rate.

Finally, I want to leave the American people from the onerous ObamaCare mandates that require them to purchase insurance they don’t want and can’t afford. It shouldn’t be a surprise to anybody that if you take the penalty away and don’t force the American people to buy insurance they don’t want, many of them—the younger, healthy ones, in particular—will decide not to buy it. That is called freedom of choice. That is not what ObamaCare did. ObamaCare forced people to buy insurance they didn’t want and penalized them if they didn’t. So many people will choose not to purchase it and decide to handle their healthcare in other ways—perhaps, at the emergency room, where under Federal law everybody who comes in as a medical emergency is entitled to be treated. It is not what I would tell my children. It is not what I would recommend for anybody, but if somebody wants to make that choice, it is certainly their right.

So I would just conclude by observing that it is shameful that Members on the other side of the aisle sit on their hands and do nothing to fix a law that continues to hurt American families. We know that regardless of who won the last election—whether it was Hillary Clinton or whether it was Donald Trump—we would have to take steps to address this failed law. So I would implore our Democratic friends to listen to their own stories, which some have recounted to me in confidence. So I won’t repeat their names here, but they know this is a problem. They have heard from their constituents just like we have had from ours. We have to work with them to try to help us help our constituents. That is what I thought we were here for.

Americans are ready for healthcare reform that actually works, and it is something we want to do over the very near term to provide that to them and that is what we intend to do.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded to listen to their own stories, which some have recounted to me in confidence. So I won’t repeat their names here, but they know this is a problem. They have heard from their constituents just like we have had from ours. We have to work with them to try to help us help our constituents. That is what I thought we were here for.

Americans are ready for healthcare reform that actually works, and it is something we want to do over the very near term to provide that to them and that is what we intend to do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I listened to the majority leader this morning saying that ObamaCare was collapsing and Republicans are on a rescue mission. Honestly, the gull it must take to say, after Republicans and President Trump have spent all year sabotaging the marketplace, that ObamaCare is collapsing. They have threatened to stop critical cost-sharing payments that help keep deductibles and premiums down, hurting millions of people and sowing uncertainty in the market.

There is an easy way to fix it. Instead of crying crocodile tears, Republicans should guarantee that the cost-sharing payments will be made. That is not just Democrats saying it. That is the insurers. Listen to the insurers. What do they want? They want to keep premiums down and prevent them from leaving the exchanges. They want cost-sharing, which our Republican colleagues refuse to do, and, then, in a cynical ploy, they try to blame ObamaCare.

Listen to AHIP, the Nation’s largest trade group of insurers. It is nonpartisan. It is a business group. Listen to what they said about the uncertainty about cost-sharing payments. They said it was “the single most destabilizing factor in the individual market.” A series of insurance companies, including Blue Cross Blue Shield companies, the biggest public insurer, said that the uncertainty caused by President Trump and Republicans about cost-sharing is causing them to pull out of certain markets.

So this idea, this cynical ploy—after sabotaging the law and then blaming someone else for what you had done—is pitiful.

The House bill, of course, was so bad—TrumpCare was so bad—that our Republican friends are trying to switch the blame to ObamaCare. It is not true, and it will not work.

Now, last night, Democrats held the floor well into the night to discuss the Republican plan to pass a healthcare bill in just 2 weeks that no one in America—including the President—has seen. They want us to pass a single committee hearing or a robust debate on the bill. They want to bring the floor and rush it in the dark of night for some reason. They are ashamed of their bill. They don’t want anybody to see it, least of all the public.

Last evening, I asked the majority leader if the minority would have more than 10 hours to debate and amend the final bill. He replied that “there will be opportunity to debate and amend the bill.” So I asked again: Will we get more than 10 hours? Ten hours is the maximum the rules allow us under reconciliation. He could only reply that “There will be ample time.”

I have a feeling the majority leader and I disagree on the definition of “ample,” because 10 hours of debate time—a total of 10 hours of debate time on an issue this important—is a sham. It is a farce. We would have to read the Affordable Care Act, the bill, prepare amendments, and consider its consequences, all in 10 hours.

This is a bill that affects one-sixth of our economy, millions of Americans. For them, it is life and death, and we are supposed to rush it through.

The Affordable Care Act, for the sake of comparison, was debated for 25 consecutive days of Senate session and 169 cumulative hours of debate time, and that was after a robust hearing and committee process. Yesterday, the majority leader basically told us that we Democrats might only have 10 hours total—no committee hearings, no committee markups, no airing the bill—10 hours of debate. Can my colleagues believe it? This is supposed to be a democracy where we debate the greatest issues of our time.

I asked another question of the majority leader, and I ask him now and I hope he will answer: Will our 10 hours of debate time be on the House bill or will it be on the new Senate bill that he has already had a second reading? Will he let us debate the full 10 hours on the new Senate bill—hardly enough—or is he even being more cynical and doing...
the 10 hours of debate on the existing House bill and then putting a substitute in—the Senate bill they have written behind closed doors—and have no debate on that? With everything terrible that is happening, that could make it even worse. So I am asking the majority leader to publicly state what his plan is in that regard.

I have never heard of a more radical or a more reckless process in my entire career in politics—10 hours of total debate on a bill that would affect one-sixth of the American economy is the loss of insurance for millions of Americans. If the Senate bill, like the House bill, results in 23 million fewer Americans with insurance—23 million Americans losing their insurance—each hour of debate time would represent 2.3 million Americans losing their insurance. Each minute of debate time would represent 40,000 Americans losing their insurance. One minute, and 40,000 people’s lives are changed; 40,000 people don’t have what they need.

It boggles the mind that the Republican leader is moving forward this way without letting anyone but Members of the Republican Senate caucus see the bill, and even many of them have said they don’t like it. There is only one possible reason why my friends on the other side are going along with this process—only one reason: They are ashamed of the bill they are writing. If they were proud of the bill, they would have a brass band going down Main Street America, saying: Look at our great bill. They can’t even whisper what it is about, they are so, so ashamed of it. That is why they are hiding it. They must be ashamed that, just like the House bill, the Senate TrumpCare bill will put healthcare out of the reach of millions of Americans just to put another tax break into the pockets of the very wealthy.

President Trump likes to end many of his tweets with one word, almost like punctuation: “Sad.,” “unfair.,” “wrong.” It turns out the President has one word to sum up his healthcare plan as well: ‘Mean.”

Last week, at a White House lunch with Republican Senators, the President reportedly told them he thought the House-passed healthcare bill was mean. That is what Donald Trump said on June 13, 2017. Put the topic of healthcare. I find myself agreeing with the President. His healthcare bill is mean. Cutting Medicaid to the bone is mean. Cutting treatment for opioid abuse is mean. Cutting support for families with someone in a nursing home is mean. Cutting support for people with preexisting conditions is mean. Charging older Americans five times or more for their health insurance is mean.

Passing a law which would cause millions of Americans to lose their health insurance in order to give a tax break to the wealthiest among us is pretty much the textbook definition of a mean bill—a mean bill—and even the President thinks so, but just like the Republicans in the Senate, President Trump doesn’t want the American people to know what he really thinks of their healthcare plan. That is why he said it was mean behind closed doors at the White House. It was in public a few weeks earlier he said it is a “great plan,” “very, very incredibly well-crafted.” Those are his words, the same bill—the same bill—out to the public: Great bill, great plan; while behind closed doors, while in private, he says it is mean. All the plaudits the President gave the House bill turned out to be flimsy salesmanship. Speaking candidly to fellow Republicans, the President didn’t say: Take up and pass the House bill. He didn’t say it was a great plan or that it was very, very incredibly well-crafted. He said it was mean. My Republican friends ought to take this to heart. Even President Trump thinks what Republicans are doing on healthcare is a cruelty to the American people.

As we on this side of the aisle have said before, there is a better way. Republicans shouldn’t feel like this mean bill cooked up in secret is their only option. I have invited my Republican friends to meet in the Old Senate Chamber to discuss a bipartisan way forward on healthcare. The Republican leader seems to have foreclosed that option, but the invitation remains and the sentiment remains. Democratic colleagues are willing to work with our Republican friends on improving our healthcare system. We have significant disagreements, sure, but Republicans haven’t even tried to sit down with us to hash them out. We would like to try, but if Republicans continue down this path, ignoring the principles of transparency and the open debate that defined this legislative body, we Democrats will continue to do everything we can to shine light on what our Republican friends are doing. I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes.

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

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise in support of Ms. Sigal Mandelker, President Trump’s nominee to be Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

Five weeks ago, at Ms. Mandelker’s hearing, members of the Banking Committee were moved by her heartfelt story of her parents’ escape from the Holocaust. As her father proudly sat behind her, she explained to the committee how, as Holocaust survivors who narrowly avoided death, her parents raised her to never take for granted our safety, security, or freedom.

It was appropriate Ms. Mandelker went to public service, where she had an impressive career in law enforcement and national security at the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security before joining the private sector.

Like many Americans, she was compelled to action following 9/11 and joined to serve in Justice’s counterterrorism and national security mission. Throughout the nomination process, it was obvious Ms. Mandelker would be a strong leader to defend our Nation against terrorism and illicit finance threats. She received bipartisan support from the Banking Committee in a 16-to-7 vote advancing her nomination. Also, with bipartisan support, just last week the Senate voted on the Iran sanctions bill and our Russia sanctions amendment. Part of Ms. Mandelker’s job as Under Secretary would be directly overseeing sanctions policy on Iran, Russia, North Korea, Syria, and some 25 other programs.

Given Ms. Mandelker’s strong qualifications, dedication to service and mission, and bipartisan support from this committee of jurisdiction, I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is on a point of order. The Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the nomination, which the clerk will report. The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brock Long, of North Carolina, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Long nomination? Mr. CRAPO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll. The legislative clerk called the roll. Mr. CORKY. The following Senator is necessary absent: the Senator from South Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?
The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 4, as follows:

[Roll Call Vote No. 149 Ex.]

**YEAS—95**


**NOT VOTING—1**

Graham

**EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued**

**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 assistant bill clerk read as follows:

**CLOTURE MOTION**

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.


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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

**Mr. CORNYN.** The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 94, nays 5, as follows:

[Roll Call Vote No. 149 Ex.]

**YEAS—94**


**NOT VOTING—1**

Graham

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 94, the nays are 5.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Arkansas.

**ORDER FOR RECESS**

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly conference meetings and the time during the recess count post cloture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arkansas.

**CONFIRMATION**

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, last year, a woman named Carol Denise Richardson was released from Federal prison after President Obama granted her clemency. She had been serving a life sentence for possessing and intending to distribute 50 or more grams of cocaine, on top of having an already lengthy criminal record. She had not done anything specifically violent, so, theoretically, we should have been able to release her early and see good results, at least according to the advocates of criminal leniency.

Unfortunately, nothing good has come from this decision. Now, less than a year later, Carol Richardson is going back to prison. As part of her release, she was put on a 10-year probation, which meant she had to check in regularly with her probation officers, but she did not. She did not tell them she had left her job. She did not tell them she had moved. She did not even tell them she had been arrested.

Her latest offense, I should say, falls somewhere short of heinous. She was arrested in Pasadena, TX, for stealing $60 worth of laundry detergent so she could buy drugs.

From everything I have read in the news, it seems clear that Carol Richardson is not a serious, violent menace to society, but it is also clear she was not prepared to reenter society. She still had not kicked her drug habit. She still could not keep and hold a steady job. She still could not meet the most basic requirements of citizenship and basic adulthood.

But the real question is, Why would she be ready? Why would we expect that of her? She never went through the rehab that could have given her a second chance at life. Instead we just threw her in the deep end and watched her sink. That is why I think this story is worth mentioning, because I believe we should give pause to everyone who advocates of criminal leniency.

They like to argue that taking people out of prison both heals communities and saves money. But who was better off, Carol Richardson was released? Not her community; she committed a crime within months. Not the taxpayers; they are still paying for prison costs. And here is the thing: Neither was she. She is back in prison yet again.

But, sometimes, the consequences are worse than this sad story. They are horrifying. Last year, a man named Wendell Callahan brutally killed his ex-girlfriend and her two young daughters. A frantic 911 call from the scene said that the two girls’ throats had been slit.

These murders were an atrocity, and they were completely avoidable. Wendell Callahan walked out of Federal prison in August of 2014 after his sentence had been reduced in accordance with the provisions of sentencing guidelines made by the Sentencing Commission. Callahan’s original sentence should have kept him in jail until 2018. If he had been in jail instead of on the streets, a young family would be alive today.

What the Richardson case, on one hand, and the Callahan case, on the other hand, show us are two things: First, if we are going to reform the criminal justice system, we shouldn’t focus on merely reducing sentences. That doesn’t do all that much to help our society. Instead, we should focus on rehabilitating people while they are in prison, whatever the length of their sentence. They need serious help if they are ever going to help themselves and, once they are out of jail, stay out for good. And we should give them that help, not only because it is
good for them—though it is—but because it is good for us as a society. This is why I support real reform that will make our prisons safer for inmates and correction officers alike and take real steps to help inmates leave their lives of crime once and for all.

The second lesson is this: We need to know far more than we do now about how many people we release early from prison go back to a life of crime. What types of crimes do they commit? How many murders? How many robberies? How many burglaries? These numbers can be small or they can be large, but we need to know them to understand the full scope of our problem. And having that information will help the President decide each case as he considers when and how to use his pardon power.

But, today, the Federal Government doesn’t even compile these data.

That is why I, along with Senators HATCH, Sessions, and PERDUE, introduced legislation that the government collect and report on these numbers. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass into law. So I want to announce today that I intend to reintroduce the bill with a renewed sense of urgency. That is our goal, after all. We don’t know how many people granted clemency are returning to crime. But that is all the more reason to start collecting more data. We need to thoroughly evaluate cold, hard evidence and make any needed sweeping changes to our criminal laws.

Carol Richardson’s story should warn us of the perils of letting ideology get the better of common sense. We owe it to our neighbors to keep their families safe, and we owe it to the Carol Richards of the world to give them a real and honest chance at life once they complete their sentence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, on May 4 of this year, there was a party at the White House, a celebration—but what a great plan? Mr. Trump called it a “great plan.” He said the American people liked this bill.

And having that information will help us to start collecting more data. We need to thoroughly evaluate cold, hard evidence and make any needed sweeping changes to our criminal laws.

Carol Richardson’s story should warn us of the perils of letting ideology get the better of common sense. We owe it to our neighbors to keep their families safe, and we owe it to the Carol Richards of the world to give them a real and honest chance at life once they complete their sentence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, on May 4 of this year, there was a party at the White House, a celebration—a celebration that the House had passed TrumpCare. Indeed, the President wanted to invite people over and say what a great job they had done and what a great bill they had passed. He called it “great plan.” He said the House plan was “very, very incredibly well-drafted.”

That was on May 4—a party at the White House, a celebration—but what a difference a month can make. A week ago, on Tuesday, June 13, the President had another gathering, and at this gathering he said that the bill from the House was “mean,” and he went on to use a very derogatory phrase to describe it.

So what happened between May 4 and June 13? Did the bill change in some way? Absolutely not. It had already been passed out of the House. Apparently what happened is that someone explained to the President what was in it, and he said: That is terrible. We can’t do that. It is a mean bill. And he used other vivid language to say just how bad it was.

What feature of the TrumpCare bill did the President get briefed on that made him say that it was mean? It certainly was not that it was bad. It certainly is a hard-hearted bill. It certainly is destructive to the quality of life of millions and millions of Americans. So which aspect of the bill was he referring to?

I asked that question of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tom Price, when he came to the Senate for a hearing last week. I asked the Secretary if he shared the President’s opinion that the TrumpCare bill was a mean bill. He didn’t have an answer for that. He wouldn’t say whether, as a leader in the administration on healthcare, he shared the President’s opinion.

I asked whether he thought the President thought it was a mean-spirited and cruel healthcare from 23 million Americans. The Secretary of healthcare didn’t answer.

I asked whether it was mean because it eliminated essential health benefits like emergency care and rehabilitation services and addiction treatment and maternity coverage for women having a child. The Secretary again refused to answer.

And he proceeded to say things like “Well, we’ve heard this,” and that he hadn’t talked to the President about why the President didn’t like the bill. One would think that the Secretary of Health and Human Services, upon hearing that the President thought that the bill he had advocated for was terrible, would actually go to him and say: What is it you thought was so terrible? That might inform the conversations here in the Senate. But he said that he hadn’t talked to the President about it. The Secretary of Health and Human Services didn’t want to know why the President disliked this bill.

I asked if the President thought that this was a mean bill because it has vast premium increases for older Americans. An individual in their mid-sixties, prior to the age for Medicare, a 64-year-old earning $26,500—how much would they pay under current law and how much would they pay under TrumpCare? Under current law, the answer is about $140 a month. And under TrumpCare from the House, the answer is $1,200 per month—an eightfold increase. How can anyone earning a little over $2,000 a month spend $1,200 on health insurance? It is an impossible situation.

So of course, those Americans in that situation would not be able to buy health insurance, would not be able to access healthcare. Is that why the President thought it was mean? Did the President get briefed on the damage it would do to the older Americans? Or was the President concerned about the impact on our older Americans who need to have care in a nursing home? Is the President finally aware that Medicaid pays for more than 6 out of 10 individuals who are in a nursing home because they need a level of care that can’t be provided in the home?

I went and visited a nursing home over the weekend in urban Oregon and then visited one in rural Oregon, in Klamath County. In Klamath County they told me that almost 100 percent of the citizens in these homes are paid for by Medicaid. Nationally, it is a little more than 6 of 10, but in this rural community, almost 100 percent. I thought about the residents there and what happens to them. Under this bill, Medicaid is slashed massively, and 23 million folks lose access to it, what happens to them? One woman, Deborah, said: Senator, Medicaid pays for my bill and if it doesn’t exist for me—if it is taken away—I am on the street and that is a problem because I can’t walk.

So picture an older American, a senior American who needs an intensive level of care that can’t be provided in some being thrown into the street in a wheelchair, unable to walk, and, by the way, no support structure because in order to qualify for Medicaid to pay your bill, you have to have spent down all your own resources, so it isn’t like somebody has a backup plan. Maybe there are family members who will take them in and provide an intensive level of care. Maybe a few will have friends who will take them in and provide an intensive level of care. But for the vast majority of support structure isn’t there, and that means they are going to be on the street. Is that why the President said it was mean?

Was it because the bill said States can charge more, allow insurance companies to charge more for individuals with preexisting conditions? That is certainly a huge problem. Community pricing has given access to insurance at the same price to everyone in America, regardless of preexisting conditions, but, unfortunately, TrumpCare changes that.

I think we need to recognize that now, here in the Senate, 13 Senators are working to craft a Senate version of TrumpCare, and they are terrified—terrified of the public seeing their bill. It is a vampire bill. It is afraid of the sunlight—the sunlight of public commentary, input, even a public discussion from experts. They are afraid of the expert commentary. And they want to hide it until the last second so they can bring it to the floor—next Thursday, a week from this Thursday—and then pass it in a moment’s time, less than a day.

I was fascinated that our Secretary of Health and Human Services—after there were more than 100 hearings and roundtables and walk-throughs of the healthcare bill in 2009, after consideration of more than 300 amendments in the Senate, after more than 100 Republican amendments that were adopted,
minority amendments adopted, after more than 25 days of debate on the Senate floor—complained that the bill and the process were not transparent. If that wasn’t transparent, how do you score the transparency of a bill where there have to be our own States and their townhalls, zero chance for legislators to weigh in, zero chance for public input by experts, zero chance for the citizens of the United States to see this bill and share their feelings, zero chance for us to go back to their feet?  

Ask yourself: What is your value? Is it your value that every American should have access to affordable healthcare? That is my value. That is what I am fighting for. What are you fighting for? Are you fighting to destroy healthcare for millions of Americans? Is that your value—to make life difficult and hard and mean-spirited and hard-hearted and terrible and painful for millions of Americans?  

But if you value your constituents’ quality of life, if you value their peace of mind, then put a stop to this abomination, this anti-democratic process. Insist that the Senate and House craft an improvement on the floor and deliberation with constituents back home.  

There is a phrase for the Senate—probably not merited; in fact, I am sure it is not merited—that the Senate was the world’s greatest deliberative body. But crafting legislation in secret affects the quality of life of millions and millions of Americans, with no deliberation, that is not a legislative process. That is not what was envisioned under our Constitution, our “we the people” Constitution. It wasn’t a “we the secret group of powerful folks accommodating powerful special interests, government by and for the powerful.” That wasn’t the introduction to our Constitution. Perhaps Members might read the first three words of the Constitution. Perhaps folks might go back and look at our history of why we have this floor to debate the issues, because that is what a system of government of, by, and for the people is all about.  

In my home State, the elimination of Medicaid expansion—that is, the Oregon Health Plan expansion—would have thrown off of Medicaid over 400,000 people. Stretching that timeline from a couple years to 7 years doesn’t change the fact that 400,000 people lose healthcare. That is mean-spirited. That is heartless. That is terrible healthcare policy.  

It is not just those individuals who are affected. The uncompensated care rate has dropped enormously in Oregon, from 15 percent to 5 percent. The result is that there is much more income going to hospitals and to our communities. The result is better healthcare for everyone in our rural communities, everyone in our urban communities. Nonetheless, the majority persists in wanting to destroy this improvement.  

I am hearing from people like Elizabeth from Portland, who wrote to say that the Oregon Health Plan saved her life. The Oregon Health Plan, or Medicaid, saved her life. She was in school, and she had some health problems that were terrible, because of stress. But she didn’t have a job and didn’t have insurance, and things were getting bad. Then the Affordable Care Act came around, and it extended coverage. Since then, she has gotten her health problems under control, finished school, and was able to get a job. In Elizabeth’s own words:  

I am once again contributing to society. I just need a bit of time and help and I’m back on my feet.  

Isn’t it the right thing to provide a foundation for every single American to have access to quality healthcare, so that when they get sick, it helps them get back on their feet?  

So we need three champions. Just three out of 52. It should be 52 out of 52 who insist on a quality public process. We have heard the comments in the hallways, many Members of the majority dislike the fact that there is a secret process that their majority leader is insisting on. We have heard that they don’t like it. It is not right. But I know what Senator Mary Landrieu has said here has a chance to say no to the secret operation, the secret committee of 13, and the last-second presentation of such a bill on the floor.  

The issue of the changes in healthcare without public deliberation terrifies folks like Deborah from Hillsboro, OR. She was diagnosed with Crohn’s disease 8 years ago and has to take regular injections and medications to keep it under control. She does a lot of things right. She doesn’t smoke, she exercises, and she follows her doctor’s recommended diet. Other than her regular medications, she lives a normal, healthy life, and she is looking forward to retiring in the near future with her husband. They have been working hard their whole lives. They have been saving up for it. It is so close that they can almost taste it. But it is a dream that could be shattered by the Republican healthcare plan—the TrumpCare plan—being concocted secretly by 13 Members of this body. As she says:  

Without affordable coverage for pre-existing conditions I cannot even switch jobs easily. If Medicare is reduced or eliminated, as the GOP is trying to do, I may never be able to retire . . . we should not now, or ever, eliminate coverage for pre-existing conditions (or price that coverage such that most of us will never be able to afford it).  

She is worried that changes that refer to Medicaid and the Oregon Health Plan will ruin her ability to retire and her ability to access healthcare.  

I don’t know exactly what the President was briefed on that make him call TrumpCare “mean” and then speak in a very derogatory fashion about the bill from the House. I don’t know exactly what he learned. I don’t know if it was because he learned that folks on long-term care could lose that long-term care and Medicaid pays for more than 6 out of 10 Americans who are in long-term care. I don’t know if it was because he learned about preexisting conditions. I don’t know if it was because he learned it would throw 23 million people out of the healthcare system. I don’t know if it was because he learned this would have devastating consequences to rural healthcare because of the impact on the finances of clinics and hospitals.  

Whatever he meant, he was right. He was right to make that transition from a month earlier when he held a celebration at the White House because this terrific, wonderful bill had been passed by the House, and when he sobered up and discovered that it was a mean-spirited, hard-hearted bill, he did the right thing. For all these reasons, no healthcare should be crafted and jammed through without deliberation. No significant bill affecting
Mr. President, I yield the floor.
get a great experience yourself, you know you are giving back to our local economy, and you are helping create jobs.

I want to encourage everyone to recognize National Great Outdoors Month by going out to enjoy something new there. Don't just talk about it. Get outdoors and experience all that the outdoors has to offer.

I yield my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Montana. I have hiked in his State before, and it is a wonderful place. Their mountains are a tad higher than ours, but both my wife and I love hiking in the mountains, and I have enjoyed his State.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. President, for the last 7 years, we have heard Republicans in Congress campaign on the pledge to repeal the Affordable Care Act. For 7 years they have said we are going to repeal it and replace it. State to State, district to district, like President Trump, they pledged to repeal and replace the health reform bill that made access to affordable healthcare a reality for millions of Americans.

One would think—and what I get asked in Vermont is—when they campaigned for 7 years that they were going to repeal and replace it as soon as they were in power, you would think they would have a plan to do that. But it seems there is no plan. Instead, there are a dozen or so Republican lawmakers meeting behind closed doors. And they are shielded from public view. I don’t think any other Members of Congress are allowed in their presidium. But they are having a debate, no process, no showing what the cost would be, and no bill. They are keeping a tight lid on the decisions they are making for the rest of America. What I get asked back home in Vermont is: What are they so afraid of? We are about to find out.

We hear they still intend to bring this yet-to-be-finalized bill to the Senate floor very soon under the expedited reconciliation process, without even the most basic vetting and transparency. Not only is this latest TrumpCare plan that is about to be foisted on the American people and on the Senate not ready for prime time; it is not fit for prime time. It is really nothing short of shameful.

I don't think any other Members of Congress are allowed in their presidium. Republicans in Congress are foisting on the American people and on Vermont a plan that makes devastating cuts to the Medicaid Program. And they have done this with no hearings, no debate, no process, no showing what the cost would be, and no bill. They are keeping a tight lid on the decisions they are making for the rest of America. What I get asked back home in Vermont is: What are they so afraid of? We are about to find out.

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Certainly, in my decades here in the Senate, I have never seen anything by either Republican or Democratic majorities done like this. In fact, I will give you an idea of how it can be done differently.

When the Democrats were in control, before we passed the Affordable Care Act, the Senate held over 100 hearings on the issue. Republicans haven’t held one. We had over 100 hearings. We had roundtables on health reform. Hundreds of amendments were considered by the Senate Finance and HELP Committees during an exhaustive markup process with 160 amendments. It is a process itself stretched for so long—more than a year—in the vain hope that Republicans would come to the table and stay at the table. In fact, the final Senate bill included more than 145 Republican sponsored amendments. It was posted for every single person in America to see for nearly a week before the Finance Committee marked it up. The same can be said for the HELP Committee. Then, more than 160 hours were spent on this Senate floor in considering the Affordable Care Act. Everybody had an opportunity to speak on it. That is when the Democrats controlled the Senate.

What is happening with the Republican bill they have 100 hearings? No, they have not had one single hearing, and they are not having any debate and not having any process. We don’t even know what this is going to cost. And as of right now, there is no bill.

Under the House-passed TrumpCare bill, the State of Vermont is going to lose coverage. And then the President proposed a budget that assumes savings from the repeal of the Affordable Care Act through big, big cuts to the Medicaid Program.

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in a sudden about-face, he described the House-passed bill as “mean.” “Mean” is what President Trump said of the House GOP healthcare plan.

Some back home may find it a surprise that I could be in agreement with President Trump but do you know what? President Trump is right. I am saying it right here on the floor: President Trump is right. The House-passed bill that he praised is mean. It is mean because it would do so much harm to so many Americans.

It is doable. It is unrealistic. And if Senate Republicans think they can fix it behind closed doors, they are wrong. We should be working together, Republicans and Democrats—together—to improve the Affordable Care Act. If there are parts where it is flawed, let’s fix it. If there are parts where it could be improved, let’s join together and strengthen it. Let’s not double down on Americans at a time when their President is turning his back on programs that support our social safety net. Women and children and low-income Americans and small businesses alike are all going to suffer under his plans.

We 100, as representatives of our constituents, have a responsibility to give voice to their concerns. We 100 Senators are elected to represent 350 million Americans. We are supposed to be the conscience of the Nation. Maybe it is time that each one of us—Republicans and Democrats alike, started listening to what Americans say about healthcare.

A family physician from Manchester, VT, wrote to me saying: “I do not support efforts to roll back or eliminate the patient-centered insurance reforms established in recent years that prohibit discrimination against patients due to their race, gender, health status, or geographic location. These reforms matter to the everyday lives of our patients.”

Someone from Jericho, VT, “I had Hodgkin’s lymphoma 3 years ago and was fortunate to have insurance to cover most of the roughly $100,000 bill. Having had cancer is stressful enough without constantly worrying about severe financial consequences if it strikes again.”

From Bennington, VT, “My son has a chronic illness that, without our insurance, would cost $1,000 per month in prescriptions alone. That doesn’t even cover the regular checkups. Right now he is covered, but, as I’m sure you remember from when you first got out of college or high school, we know that he may not have as good coverage when he gets out on his own.”

The Republican plan is a death sentence for him.

“These are real people. These are real stories. And I am willing to guess that there are similar people in virtually every State in this country with more stories like these. This isn’t a political campaign. This is about life and death and access to healthcare. For these Vermonters and for millions of Americans across the country, the decisions we make here will have consequences—real consequences in their lives. Every Senator should think about that before we hastily undo years of progress to increase affordable healthcare for millions of Americans.”

The Republican majority, led on, cheered on by President Trump, passed a bill which would take so many millions of people off of healthcare. It would make it so much more difficult for people to get healthcare. Then the bill they fought so hard to pass, the bill they cheered on, the bill they celebrated in the Rose Garden with President Trump, nobody ever read what they passed. What a novel idea. They had all voted on it. They had all gone home. The President had praised them. I remember the pictures of them beaming in the praise of the President. Well, somebody finally read the bill and told the President, and he said that bill is “mean.” The House GOP healthcare plan—that bill is “mean.”

Well, I agree with President Trump, but you know what they are pushing now is a程序 that every Senator reads—the Senate bill; yet nobody has seen the Senate bill. Nobody knows how many people are being cut off the roll. Nobody knows how many people are going to be without healthcare. Nobody knows how large the cuts will be to Medicaid. Nobody knows how much our 50 States are going to be hurt by it. Nobody knows which millions of Americans—good, hard-working, honest Americans—are going to lose healthcare in the wealthiest, most powerful Nation on Earth.

Will that be celebrated? Then, after it is passed, will somebody at the White House whisper to the President: The Senate bill is pretty mean, too. The Senate bill is pretty mean, but by golly, we got it passed. We had it on our bumper stickers that we would, and we got it passed. We are wealthy. We will have our healthcare. Too bad for those tens of millions of Americans who won’t.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a list of committees requesting authority to meet be printed in the RECORD.

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

Committee on Armed Services
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Committee on Foreign Relations
Committee on the Judiciary
Committee on Intelligence
Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Sciences
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining
Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy
Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE SYSTEM

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this afternoon to mark the 40th anniversary of the first oil moving through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. In Alaska, we call it TAPS. This is an 800-mile-long engineering marvel that runs from the North Slope of Alaska to tidewater in Valdez.

Forty years is a good, long history. I recognize that, and so this afternoon, in the interest of the record, I will abbreviate the history, but I want to start the story of our pipeline in the late 1960s. Believe it or not, this was a pretty bleak moment for oil exploration in Alaska. Despite great promise, many companies had given up on exploration on the North Slope. By some accounts, at that point in time, there were at least 14 dry holes that had been drilled before ARCO and Hulse Oil Company decided they were going to sink just one last well. It was actually an ARCO executive who described it as a decision not to cancel a well already scheduled to go ahead.”

That well, Prudhoe Bay State No. 1, would prove to be a game changer for Alaska. We had discovered oil. We discovered oil on the North Slope and a lot of it. We quickly learned that Prudhoe Bay would be one of the largest oilfields in global history, by far the largest ever discovered in the United States. Early estimates, at that time, suggested as much as 9 billion barrels of oil could be recovered from it. We have learned over these intervening 40 years that we so far underestimated that.
Yet it was not just the issue of discovering the oil. Prudhoe Bay is located in a very remote part of the State, as far north as you can go—a pretty inhospitable area given the climate—far away from population centers in the lower 48. A lot of challenges needed to be overcome before production could begin.

Initially, it was like, OK, how do we move significant quantities of oil? How do we transport this oil to market? It was Dan Yergin, in his book “The Prize,” who first got things moving. Yergin described the various alternatives that were out there.

He wrote: “Icebreaker tankers that would travel through the frozen Arctic seas to the Atlantic were seriously considered. Other suggestions included a monorail or fleet of trucks in permanent circulation on an eight-lane highway across Alaska.”

They then “calculated that it would require most of the trucks in America” to do this. Yergin also noted that a prominent nuclear physicist recommended a fleet of nuclear-powered submarine tankers that would travel under the polar ice cap to a deepwater port in Greenland—the port to be created, in turn, by a nuclear explosion. Boeing and Lockheed explored the idea of jumbo jet oil tankers.”

Obviously, none of those ideas came about, and some probably for very good reason, but after significant study and debate, a pipeline was deemed the best way to transport Alaska’s oil. While two routes were considered—one over land, which would run across Canada—an all-Alaska route was ultimately chosen as the best way to go.

Yet, even then, pipeline construction could not begin right away. There were serious debates in the State over issues like taxes and tariffs and pipeline ownership, and it really consumed our State’s legislature for years. The land claims of the Natives needed to be settled. This occurred in the landmark legislation that passed in 1971.

Then it was in 1973 that Congress took up the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act. As part of that debate here on the Senate floor, Alaska’s Senators offered an amendment to deem the environmental impact statement for the pipeline to be sufficient and to shield it from what could have been decades of litigation by its opponents. This was an important aspect to the debate and really to the future of the pipeline in order to ensure that this construction would not be delayed by litigation.

The vote was as close as votes get here in the Senate. It was deadlocked 49 to 49, and sitting in that chair, the Vice President at the time, Spiro Agnew, cast the deciding vote in Alaska’s favor. So every time I see the bust of Vice President Agnew, I look at him. Other people reflect on Vice President Agnew in different ways. I reflect on that deciding vote that allowed us to proceed with our Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

The pipeline bill went on to pass the Senate on a strong bipartisan basis. Not long after that, then-President Richard Nixon signed it into law. This was tremendous news for Alaska because we would be allowed to move forward with the construction.

The construction of this pipeline was a monumental undertaking, but that monumental undertaking was also done with considerable speed. In April of 1974, construction on a 360-mile haul road began. We now call it the Dalton Highway, and it was completed in 154 days.

For those of you who have heard my plea on the floor and to colleagues who have been in committees when I have talked about the history of my efforts to try to get a 10-mile, one-lane, gravel, noncommercial-use road for the people of King Cove. I think about what we were able to accomplish in 154 days with that haul road that allowed us to then help to facilitate the build-out of the pipeline.

The pipeline itself was the largest privately funded infrastructure project ever undertaken in America at the time. It was significant. It was significant for Alaska, of course, but it was significant for the Nation as well. Its total cost was about $8 billion. In October of 1975, there were about 28,000 people who were working to make this pipeline a reality, and that pipeline was completed in 1977. Again, initial construction of the haul road began in 1974. It was completed in October 1977, which was just 3 years and 2 months after construction began. I am told it was actually 10 days ahead of schedule, according to one estimate, which is pretty remarkable.

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline—and I cannot find a picture that really shows the line well—an extraordinary line, which again, is 800 miles long, running from the North Slope to an ice-free Port of Valdez at tidewater. It crosses three states, including Atigun Pass, which has an elevation of more than 4,800 feet. It reaches a grade of 55 degrees at one point in the Chugach Range. So it goes up incredible mountains and down the other side. It crosses more than 600 streams and rivers, and more than 400 miles of it are elevated above the ground.

We have it elevated above ground here, but in certain areas, you can follow the pipeline either by air, or occasionally, you can see it from the road. It is probably one of the most photographed pipelines in the country, but you will see it go underground in many areas. About half of it is buried underground.

This was part of the engineering that allowed for the recognition that you are building in a permafrost area, so it is how you ensure that you are not having an impact in the ground and the area around it.

It crosses a major fault line, the Denali Fault. Back in November of 2002, we had a 7.9 magnitude earthquake just about 90 miles from Fairbanks on that Denali Fault. The pipe moved 7½ feet horizontally—moving back and forth this way—and 2½ feet vertically. This pipeline was designed for an 8.5 earthquake. It allows for 20 feet of horizontal movement and 5 feet of vertical movement.

Engineers not only worked to cross some extraordinary terrain but also recognized that this was in an area in which earthquakes did happen. It is extraordinary to listen to the stories of the engineers who inspected every inch of that line after that earthquake in 2002 and to hear their comments about, truly, this engineering marvel.

There are so many stories about the construction of the pipeline just as there are about the oil itself, as we worked through those pipeline years. It is hard to really capture what it was like to be in Alaska during the time of the construction of that line. We saw our population boom as we saw new workers come into the State. I was living in Fairbanks at the time. I was a high school student and was going into college there. Obviously, that was my town. In my town, all of a sudden there were people from Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma. I can remember seeing guys in cowboy boots in Fairbanks in the winter on the ice and thinking that these guys are going to figure out how to change their footwear. But we worked to welcome these people who were there to really help make a difference.

There were pressures on our communities. You could not find a hotel room. You could not find a rental car. It was hard for the grocery stores to keep the shelves stocked in many of the towns. We saw a significant investment in our communities in many different ways. There were a lot of wild stories and tales, some which are appropriate to tell years afterward, some which still keep us smiling, but do not talk too much about them. There are many good stories out there.

I am proud of this extraordinary infrastructure that we have in Alaska—an extraordinary undertaking to be celebrating the fact that, for 40 years now, this pipeline has been not only contributing to Alaska, but contributing to the Nation as something that, as Alaskans, we do look to with pride.

This pipeline is not just a piece of pipe; it is an economic lifeline for the State of Alaska. Over the course of 40 years, TAPS has become the veritable backbone of our State’s economy. It has helped us create jobs to the point at which our oil and gas industry either employs or supports fully one-third of the Alaskan workforce. So it is pretty significant in terms of its impact.

It has generated tremendous revenue for our State, some $136 billion at last count, which has been used for everything from roads, to schools, to essential services. It really has helped build this State and continues to allow our State to operate.

TAPS has allowed us to create our permanent fund, which we have used to
convert the revenues from a nonrenewable resource—oil—into something that will make an enduring contribution to the growth and the prosperity of future generations.

Our pipeline has also allowed us to keep the cost of living low, which is critical in a State like Alaska, where the cost of living is extraordinarily high. Alaska has one of the lowest tax burdens of any State, and that is thanks to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. It also allows us to keep other industries, whether it is fishing or tourism—keep their taxes much lower than they would otherwise be. The scale of this is often hard to imagine.

Dr. Terrence Cole, who is a history professor at the University of Alaska, put it this way back in 2004: "Prudhoe Bay oil was worth more than everything that has been dug out, cut down, caught, or killed in Alaska since the beginning of time. The discovery of the Prudhoe Bay oil field in the late 1960s fulfilled our most optimistic dreams for statehood."

From day one, Alaska's pipeline has also strengthened the energy security of our Nation. Remember, TAPS began operating in the wake of the first Arab oil embargo, which caused a worldwide oil shortage. The discovery of the Prudhoe Bay oil field in the late 1960s fulfilled our most optimistic dreams for statehood."

Today, as we mark the 40th anniversary of TAPS, or the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, is not just a pipeline; it is an economic lifeline for Alaska, energy for the Nation. It is a source of security and prosperity for us as a nation. So I join my delegation and my colleagues—Senator SULLIVAN and Congressman HOLIFIELD—today to mark this anniversary, today, as TAPS reaches 40 good years. We look back, and we appreciate the past, but we also look forward and set our sights on another good 40 years to come.

Mr. President, I thank you, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from New Mexico.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I am happy to be joined today on the floor by Senator HINICH, who has been a real fighter for healthcare for New Mexicans, and I am looking forward to staying on the floor and hearing him specifically set aside for developing this Republican healthcare bill as well.

I rise today for the third time this session to oppose plans by President Trump and the Republicans to gut our healthcare system and to throw millions of Americans off their health insurance. On May 4 of this year, the day that House Republicans narrowly passed their TrumpCare bill, the President held a celebration at the White House in the Rose Garden and pronounced the bill a great plan.

Well, TrumpCare may be a great plan if you are wealthy and healthy, because those are the people who will get big tax cuts and if you are healthy, your premiums may not go up, and may even go down—that is, until you are sick.

TrumpCare is not a great plan if you are over the age of 62, if you are a hard-working family trying to make ends meet, if you live in a rural area, if you have or have not had one of the hundreds of illnesses that have affected so many Americans. Twenty-three million Americans will be left high and dry—out of health insurance by 2026. They don't think TrumpCare is a great plan. To them, it is a mean plan. Actually, those were President Trump's own words, as he introduced his plan: "The consequences of gutting the ACA are enormous. They are enormous for the 20 million Americans who now have healthcare because of the ACA through private insurance and through Medicaid expansion. TrumpCare is not a great plan if you..."
Before Democrats voted on ObamaCare, the Senate held 100 committee hearings, roundtables, and walk-throughs. The final Senate bill included 147 Republican amendments. The majority leader has missed an opportunity for political and moral leadership on issues we face. Senator MCCONNELL should have an honest and open process, including Senate committee hearings, with full public participation and a chance for patients to tell Congress how TrumpCare would hurt them.

Americans deserve an open process from their elected leaders. That is why I introduced a bill last week with my Democratic colleagues called the No Hearing, No Vote Act. This would require a public committee hearing for any legislation that goes through the fast-track budget reconciliation process, including the TrumpCare legislation.

Members of Congress were elected to improve lives, not destroy them, and I believe we need bipartisan cooperation to ensure we don’t do that.

If we wanted to improve on ObamaCare, we could: No. 1, make sure that all Americans have healthcare; and No. 2, make healthcare more affordable.

So I will tell my colleagues what is really happening here. The American people do not want the benefits they have gained through ObamaCare to be repealed and replaced with an inferior plan. They do not support TrumpCare. Only 17 percent of Americans support the House Republicans’ current bill. With this degree of public opposition, it is baffling that Republicans keep trying to hide TrumpCare, but Americans off their healthcare.

But the moral underpinnings of TrumpCare are as bankrupt as Trump’s New Mexico casinos. The winners of TrumpCare are the wealthy, and the Republicans are plainly serving those interests. The Republicans can keep trying to hide TrumpCare, but Americans understand that it is just plain wrong.

I want to talk about a few of the ways that it is just plain wrong. While women make up half of our population, no women serve on Senator MCCONNELL’s healthcare working group. Yet women usually benefit the most from any legislation. Women make up half of our population, but under TrumpCare, States would not have to consider women’s Medicaid-eligible providers, and the costs would be on the public schools. The problem is, New Mexico public schools cannot take on these kinds of costs. That might mean hundreds of schoolchildren could not get the care they need, and mental health treatment because no one else will be able to provide them.

Dr. Lynn McLeroy, superintendent of the Loving Municipal Schools, a rural school district in Southeastern New Mexico, said:

Medicaid funding is vital to our continuum of care and service to the majority of our students. Often, our school nurse is the only medical professional our students ever see.

New Mexico has one of the highest percent Native American populations in the country, more than 10 percent of our residents. Even though many Native Americans receive healthcare through the Indian Health Service, IHS always been able to provide needed care due to a lack of funding. Medicaid expansion has changed that and changed that dramatically.

Dr. Valory Wangler, who works with the Zuni Pueblo, says: Since the Affordable Care Act, Zuni have access to special services that were once difficult to fund and often delayed or denied.

An IHS physician working on the Zuni Reservation had a patient with severe arthritis that will require lifelong care. She needed knee replacement surgery. Before Medicaid expansion, IHS had trouble funding knee replacements, and the surgery was denied for years because IHS could only afford to pay for life and loss of limb services. This patient is now on the Medicaid expansion. She was able to get a total knee replacement, is working full time, staying fit, and is no longer in pain.

One of the ACA’s most popular provisions is the protection from discrimination if you have a preexisting condition. This is one of the most mystifying parts of TrumpCare. Republicans would end that protection by allowing States to waive out and set up high-risk pools.

All of us know someone with a serious illness or condition, like Kitt here. Kitt is 4½ years old and has type I diabetes that will require lifelong care. Her mother Dana is worried about losing her Medicaid or insurance if TrumpCare becomes law. Dana says: It breaks my heart that elected officials are leaning toward dropping the Federal mandate to guarantee affordable health insurance for those with preexisting conditions. It is one of the main reasons that a child who has an incurable disease and be their warrior in DC to make everything possible for that special soul and their family to have an easier tomorrow.

I hope we will all be those warriors to protect that healthcare provision which has been put in place for them.

I yield to Senator HEINRICH.

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. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the question be reversed.

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking my colleague from New Mexico, Senator Udall, for his advocacy on behalf of the pieces and parts of our healthcare system that are so important to the State of New Mexico. Things like rural hospitals, opioid treatment, Indian Country, he has been an incredible champion on those. That is part of the reason why both of us come to the floor today, given what is at stake.

Last month, President Trump and House Republicans rushed through a disastrous healthcare bill that would leave New Mexico families paying thousands of dollars more for less healthcare coverage. It would destroy the Medicaid Program as it currently exists in our State and throw our entire healthcare system into chaos. Now Senate Republicans are drafting their own version of a similar healthcare bill in complete secret, behind closed doors, with absolutely none—bipartisan input.

This lack of transparency and departure from regular order is unacceptable and shows that when the American people were told that the House bill would be the baseline for the ongoing sequester negotiations, it was the wealthiest of Americans that was foremost in Republicans’ minds. That is part of the reason why both of us came to the floor today, given what is at stake.

While we don’t know for sure what the Senate Republicans’ version of the TrumpCare bill will look like, media reports say it is shaping up to look more and more like the train wreck of a bill that President Trump and House Republicans celebrated in the White House Rose Garden just a couple months ago, a bill President Trump reportedly said in another closed-door meeting with Republican Senators last week was, in his words, “mean” and cold-hearted.

The House-passed TrumpCare bill is devastating to low-income families, to seniors, to Americans living with pre-existing conditions. This isn’t so much a healthcare bill as it is a tax cut for the ultrarich masquerading as healthcare reform. You don’t have to take my word for it. You can look at the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office described its projected impacts of the House-passed TrumpCare bill.

According to the CBO’s analysis, TrumpCare would strip 14 million of their health insurance next year and 23 million by 2026, all to give tax breaks to the wealthiest of Americans. That is reckless, and frankly it is inexcusable by any measure.

How would the bill do that? The House-passed bill, which again seems to be the baseline for the ongoing secret negotiations here in the Senate, would slash funding for the Medicaid Program by hundreds of billions of dollars and end the need-based tax credits for individual healthcare market plans under the ACA.

I have heard from so many New Mexicans who have told me how access to healthcare coverage has helped their families and, in some cases, even saved their lives.

I recently met with patients at the Ben Archer Health Center, a rural health clinic in Hatch, NM, and heard firsthand how important Medicaid coverage can be to families in Southern New Mexico. One of the New Mexicans I met there was Anna Marie, a Las Cruces native who worked for the Las Cruces public food service for 22 years. Anna Marie’s husband passed away in 2008, and when she found herself unable to keep working following a minor stroke, she could not afford healthcare coverage on her own. When she reached out to my office last year, she had bronchitis and walking pneumonia. My staff helped her enroll in Medicaid, and now she is able to get access to the care she needs.

I want to take a moment to explain why the Medicaid Program is so critical in my home State of New Mexico. As a Medicaid expansion State, New Mexico has seen dramatic gains over the last 5 years in coverage for the folks who need it the most. Stories like Anna Marie’s illustrate just how important Medicaid can be for hard-working New Mexicans.

Medicaid currently provides affordable healthcare coverage to over 900,000 New Mexicans, including many school-children, seniors in nursing homes and long-term care facilities, people with disabilities, and people who need treatment for mental health and addiction. Just one example of the wide-ranging consequences of the Republican healthcare plan’s drastic cuts to the Medicaid Program would be the end to any of the progress we have made so far in fighting the opioid and heroin epidemic. The opioid addiction epidemic has been deeply felt in communities across the State of New Mexico. For years, without adequate treatment resources, our State has suffered through some of the highest rates of opioid and heroin addiction in the Nation.

I would just note that today a story came out about how we hospitalized in 2016 one of the largest mental care hospitals in our State, the Western State Hospital. 1.3 million Americans last year because of this epidemic. However, when provided with an opportunity to receive comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation, people who have suffered through the trials of opioid addiction can and do turn their lives around.

Evidence-based treatment works, but it is only possible when we devote real resources to pay for it. So much of that comes directly through the Medicaid Program. As you can see on this chart, Medicaid covers for 50 percent of opioid medication-assisted treatment in New Mexico—30 percent. It is the foundation to build on for opioid treatment.

In States like West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky, Medicaid pays for nearly half of opioid treatment payments. This came up just last Friday when the White House hosted its first meeting for President Trump’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. Trump’s top advisors probably didn’t hear what they would have liked to from the advocates who have been on the front lines of fighting the growing opioid crisis.

For example, Dr. Joe Parks, the medical director for the Council for Behavioral Health, told the President’s Commission:

Medicaid is the largest national payer for addiction and mental health treatment. Since the majority of increased opiate deaths and suicide occur in young and middle-aged adults, which is the Medicaid expansion population, the Medicaid expansions must be maintained and completed.

It is nothing short of hypocrisy for the Trump White House to claim it is taking steps to address the opioid epidemic when it is helping Republicans in Congress push through legislation that would end the Medicaid Program as we know it. Slashing hundreds of billions of dollars of funding from the Medicaid Program will ultimately pass all of those costs on to the States. Let me give a sense for just how big a burden that would be.

In New Mexico, it is estimated that our State government would have to either come up with a way to raise $1 billion of new taxes over the next decade or cut the equivalent amount of coverage for the hundreds of thousands of New Mexicans who rely on the program. That is a hit to the State budget of 1 billion-plus dollars a year. This would have an especially hard impact on our State’s rural communities.

When you go to small towns in New Mexico, like Clayton, Raton, and Santa Rosa, you see huge healthcare listening tours, you see right away the vital role hospitals play in rural communities. In most cases, these hospitals are the only healthcare providers for many miles in any direction.

Hospitals are also often the major employer in these small towns. Rural healthcare providers face enormous challenges because it is financially difficult to provide care to populations that live over vast spaces and are, on average, older, less affluent, and more prone to chronic diseases than those in more urban and suburban communities.

Medicaid expansion and the need-based tax credits for individual healthcare market plans in the ACA have been critical financial lifelines for rural healthcare providers. Thanks to the coverage gains we have seen in New Mexico, instead of seeing uninsured patients coming to the emergency room during expensive medical emergencies, our rural healthcare providers are able to help New Mexicans live healthier lives with primary care and a preventive medicine approach.
When medical emergencies do arise, New Mexicans have coverage that helps rural healthcare providers cover those expenses. If President Trump and Republicans in the Senate pass their healthcare bill, all of that could go away, and some of our rural healthcare providers may very well have to close up shop.

Right now, more than one-third of rural hospitals are already at risk of closure. If you look at where the hospitals that have been forced to shut down in recent years are located, they are almost all in States that chose not to expand Medicaid. We should learn a lesson from that.

I know for a fact that if hospitals shut down, healthcare delivery in rural New Mexico would be decimated and economic impact would be severe in these small towns. It is estimated that when a single hospital closes in a small rural community, nearly 100 jobs are lost, taking more than $5 million directly out of the local economy.

A recent report by the Economic Policy Institute estimates that if Congress passes TrumpCare into law, New Mexico alone would lose about 50,000 jobs by the year 2022. Thanks in large part to the major coverage gains that we have seen under the ACA, the healthcare sector has been New Mexico’s strongest area of job growth for the last 5 years. New Mexico added over 4,000 healthcare jobs in 2015 alone.

A couple of months ago, I met with students at Central New Mexico Community College, CNM, in Albuquerque, who told me that for those healthcare jobs. These bright young people want to make careers out of making their communities healthier and safer. With this dangerous legislation moving through Washington, they are all worried about what it might mean for their future career plans.

Why would we want to rip the rug out from under them by wreaking havoc on the Nation’s healthcare system? Again, you really have to ask yourselves how you can lose a loss of almost 50,000 jobs by the year 2022. Thanks in large part to the major coverage gains that we have seen under the ACA, the healthcare sector has been New Mexico’s strongest area of job growth for the last 5 years. New Mexico added over 4,000 healthcare jobs in 2015 alone.

While the law could certainly be improved, the way to do it is not by passing TrumpCare, which even President Trump has admitted is a “mean” bill. Unfortunately, Republican Senate leadership in Washington just doesn’t seem to understand that the Republicans are crafting in secret, behind closed doors, is going to be very similar to the version of TrumpCare that has passed the House. That is simply bad news.

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Robin is afraid that if TrumpCare becomes law, she will once again become nothing more than an uninsured pre-existing condition. She is afraid she would be considered a high-risk pool patient who will be able to have insurance but will not be able to actually afford the coverage. She is afraid that if Republicans push through TrumpCare, she will not be able to walk, work, and will have absolutely no quality of life.

Her dream was to serve her country in our Armed Forces. She took two oaths to serve this country, and she kept those oaths—promises that she would defend this great Nation.

Robin may not be in uniform anymore, but she certainly deserves that we in Congress and here in the Senate defend her right to access quality healthcare.

For Robin and for nearly 7 million veterans, middle-class families, our seniors, and some of our most vulnerable Americans, I urge my Republican counterparts to stop these secret negotiations, take repeal off the table, and work with Democrats to improve our healthcare system. Just like Robin, each of these Americans has a story, a family, a community. Robin’s family and all Americans deserve better than having their coverage stripped away from them behind closed doors.

I yield back.
the status of the investigation into the coup attempt. On April 14, Montenegro’s special prosecutor filed indictments against 2 Russians and 12 other people for their roles in the coup attempt. This past weekend, a Montenegrin court accepted the indictment with a promise to contact Sasa Sindjelic. The two had close touch as preparations continued ahead of the October elections. The plan was this:

On election day, the Montenegrin opposition was planning large protests in front of the Parliament, expecting to draw nearly 5,000 people. Sindjelic and his coconspirators, including Bratislav Dikic, the former commander of the Serbian special police, would wear blue ribbons to be recognizable to one another, the protesters would then storm the Parliament building and declare victory for the opposition. Within 48 hours, the new government would be formed and arrests would be made across the capital, including Prime Minister Djukanovic. If the Prime Minister could not be captured, he would be killed.

The coup plotters obviously wanted to create chaos, and it appears they may have had someone in mind to blame for the violence. Ahead of the election, the Montenegrin opposition hired a U.S. company to provide services and planning to extract personnel from the Montenegrin capital, around the time of the election. It is still unclear, the precise nature of this outreach to the U.S. company by the Montenegrin opposition or what services the company may have ended up providing, if any. Now, this is speculation, but if I know the Russians, American security personnel—some likely to have military or intelligence background—on the team during the planning, the Montenegrin capital would have made excellent paties for stories on Sputnik and Russia Today.

Fortunately—one might even say luckily—the plan never got off the ground. Four days before election day, one of the coup plotters got cold feet and informed the Montenegrin authorities. On election day, Montenegrin police arrested 20 Serbian citizens, including the on-the-ground leader of the nationalists, or what services the company may have ended up providing, if any. Now, this is speculation, but if I know the Russians, American security personnel—some likely to have military or intelligence background—on the team during the planning, the Montenegrin capital would have made excellent paties for stories on Sputnik and Russia Today.

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Fortunately—one might even say luckily—the plan never got off the ground. Four days before election day, one of the coup plotters got cold feet and informed the Montenegrin authorities. On election day, Montenegrin police arrested 20 Serbian citizens, including the on-the-ground leader of the nationalists, or what services the company may have ended up providing, if any. Now, this is speculation, but if I know the Russians, American security personnel—some likely to have military or intelligence background—on the team during the planning, the Montenegrin capital would have made excellent paties for stories on Sputnik and Russia Today.
Russian attempts to interfere in other countries Committee on this whole situation holding a hearing in the Armed Services with strength, with resolve, with confidence, to undermine our belief in our own values. It is the reason some people are alive today. It is the reason some folks no longer have to worry about being denied coverage for a pre-existing condition. By the way, that requirement of not allowing an insurance company to deny you coverage because you have a pre-existing condition is not applicable just to those who are on the State and Federal exchanges. That is applicable to all insurance policies.

So if you have that kind of condition, which I can tell you might be a condition such as asthma, we are not going to insure you for the rest of your life because you had asthma or, if you want to go to the extreme—and it has been done—an insurance company saying: I am not going to insure you because you had a rash. The flip side of that is insurance companies put a lifetime limit on it so if they pay out up to a certain amount—let’s say $50,000—the insurance policy stops, no more payouts.

That is not according to the existing law. In the existing law, they can’t say you are going to lose your coverage because you exceed the lifetime limit cap that their payout is. Every day I hear from people. These dramatic townhall meetings, is it the reason some people are alive today. It is the reason some folks no longer have to worry about their coverage because they have a pre-existing condition. By the way, that requirement of not allowing an insurance company to deny you coverage because you have a pre-existing condition is not applicable just to those who are on the State and Federal exchanges. That is applicable to all insurance policies.

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pool. That could mean bankruptcy and denial of needed medicines and care.

Take, for example, an unnamed constituent from Florida’s panhandle who wrote me. I got this today.

I have chronic and persistent illnesses that would be debilitating without affordable and comprehen- sive health care, and I have chronic back pain from degenerative disc disease in every part of my spine. I have had innumerable procedures to help manage the pain, including epidural and targeted nerve block injection at multiple levels.

This unnamed individual, a constituent of mine, continues:

I am now planning to get radio frequency ablation of the nerves. Using pre-ACA rules—

Before the existing law I would have hit my lifetime limit at least 1 year ago and been unable to continue getting pain-managing treatment. I often feel like I am a burden to my wife who is one of the most understanding and supportive people I know.

He concludes:

If the AHCA passes and our insurance and total health costs go up significantly, the burden I feel right now will become a reality for more and more people who are currently living more than to suffer from uncontrollable pain. And my wife serves more than to have to care for me in that condition.

The existing law is not perfect, but it has given millions of people, including those with preexisting conditions like juvenile diabetes, access to healthcare they otherwise would not receive. This healthcare bill that passed the House that is the model for apparently something—for taking it out of that—if they are having to get an agreement between the two Houses, that Republican healthcare bill will take us back to the days when it was nearly impossible for people with a preexisting condition to get health insurance coverage. People with asthma could be forced to pay more than $4,000 more because of that preexisting condition. People with rheumatoid arthritis could be forced to pay up to $26,000, and people who are pregnant could pay more and more.

Let me tell you about another constituent from Volusia County who shared how the repeal of this would affect her.

She writes:

My husband, a 50-year-old leukemia survivor, would lose his ability to obtain comprehensive health insurance due to the lack of protections for people with pre-existing conditions.

My daughter, who has asthma and rheumatoid arthritis, would lose her ability to obtain comprehensive health insurance due to the lack of protections for people with pre-existing conditions. Our family, all hard working, tax paying Americans, will once again be subjected to annual and lifetime limits which could easily bankrupt us.

My daughter is a young woman just starting her career, who would lose her ability to purchase affordable health insurance and receive tax subsidies that she currently receives under the Affordable Care Act.

She goes on to say that she is afraid that TrumpCare would relegate them, if you change all of that, to second class citizens.

Why am I saying this about pre-existing conditions with regard to what was passed at the other end of this hallway, down at the House of Representatives? They say: No, no, pre-existing conditions are not eliminated down there. But that does not tell you the reality. The reality is that, in the House-passed bill, it is left up to the States, and the States see that as a way of so-called lowering their premiums. If you start doing that for some and do not keep it spread over the people who are now under the protection of the preexisting conditions, it is going to become a select few more, and it is going to spike the cost of that insurance.

I conclude by telling you another part of what happened down there in the House. In effect, they changed Medicaid as we know it by cutting out of it over $800 billion over a 10-year period. Donna Krajewski, from Sebastian, FL, wrote me to tell me what Medicaid is for her family.

She writes:

I am writing this letter on behalf of my son . . . who has Down syndrome . . . These blocks—

That is the technical term they are using in the House of Representatives. In other words, it is capping Medicaid to each of the States—

or cop[ ] on Medicaid will cause States to strip critical care that a son needs to live, learn and work in the community.

These [Medicaid] funds have enabled him to participate in an adult supervised day program and transportation to and from the site. This program involves classes, such as daily living skills, social skills, and daily life skills. He is also able to go out once or twice a week to socialize. . . . He has become more confident and happy with his life.

We need to find ways to improve the healthcare system. We need to fix the existing law. We do not need to unwind all of the good things that we have done. We need to fix it in a bipartisan way so that, when folks come to me and ask, “Senator, what are we going to do to fix it?” what I will then say is that it is my responsibility to do something.

Last week, I filed a bill, with a number of other Senators, that would lower healthcare premiums for people in Florida by up to 13 percent. What it would do is help to stabilize the existing law’s insurance marketplace by creating a permanent reinsurance fund that would lower the risk that insurance companies face—a risk pool, a reinsurance fund.

It is kind of like what we did back when I was the elected insurance commissioner of Florida in the aftermath of the monster hurricane—Hurricane Andrew. Insurance companies just simply could not take the risk that a category 5 would come along, hit directly on the coast, and just wipe out everything—wipe out all of the capital reinsurance companies had.

What they did was to go to a reinsurance fund for hurricanes, which we actually created in Florida—the catastrophic reinsurance fund—so that the insurance companies could reinsure themselves against a catastrophic hurricane loss.

That is exactly what this proposal is. It would lower premiums by 13 percent and create a reinsurance fund—a permanent one—that would lower the risk to the insurance companies that are insuring people’s health.

At least one Florida insurer estimates that this bill, if passed, would reduce premiums for Floridians who get their coverage through healthcare.gov by 13 percent between 2018 and 2020.

So you ask: What is a suggestion? I figured that it was my responsibility to come up with a suggestion on how to fix it. This is one of several fixes, and it is a tangible fix, and it is, in fact, filed as legislation.

What we are facing in the suggestion that I have made is not the ultimate solution to solving the healthcare system, but it is one small step in the right direction to making health insurance available and affordable for the people who need it the most.

How are we going to fix it?

You are not going to do it by running around in the dead of night, secretly putting together a plan that is only going to be a partisan plan. If you are going to fix the healthcare system, you are going to have to do it together, in a bipartisan way, building consensus. That is what I urge the Senate to do instead of what we are seeing happen behind closed doors.

Let’s get together. Let’s work together to make healthcare more affordable for people and stop all of this stuff behind the closed doors. The American people deserve better.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 5 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 4:25 p.m., recessed until 5 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. Johnson).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it is hard to argue that ObamaCare is not a failing law. Seven years after it became law, its laundry list of problems continues to grow: higher premiums, higher deductibles, customers losing healthcare plans, patients losing doctors, fewer choices, failed co-ops, unraveling exchanges. And, unfortunately, without action, that list will only get longer and the consequences will only become more severe. Republicans know that. Democrats know that. Unfortunately, many Americans know it firsthand.

The American people deserve better, and they rightly expect us to act. That
is why choosing to watch from the
delines as ObamaCare fails is not an
option.

To say that ObamaCare has created
significant problems for the American
people is an understatement. That is
why Republicans are working to fix the
mess created by ObamaCare to provide
table solutions to this failed
law. We want to save the millions of
hard-working families who are trapped
by ObamaCare’s taxes and mandates.

Average American individual market
premiums have increased by $2,928—an
ing increase of 105 percent—since 2013 in
the 39 States that use healthcare.gov.
And 62 percent of States using
healthcare.gov, including my home
State of South Dakota, saw premiums
double between 2015 and 2017. We will
help stabilize these collapsing
insurance markets that have left millions of
Americans with little or no options.

Today, one in three counties has only
one insurer on its ObamaCare ex-
changes and CMS, 47 counties
nationwide are projected to have no in-
surers, which means Americans in
these counties could be without cov-
erce on the exchanges for 2018. As
many as 1,200 counties—nearly 40
percent of counties nationwide—could
have only one issuer in 2018. It is hard
to argue that you have a market, that
you have competition, when you have
one option. That is 40 percent of the
counties in America in 2018.

We will improve the affordability of
healthcare by eliminating the
ObamaCare taxes and mandates that
are causing premiums to increase the
most. These taxes and mandates have
cost the American economy $1 trillion—
a cost that was ultimately in-
curred by patients in the form of
higher costs and larger tax bills. Reversing
these taxes will provide millions of
American families and businesses with
much needed tax relief.

We will also preserve access to care
for individuals with preexisting con-
tions. There has been a lot of debate
and misinformation, I might add, about
this issue over the past few months. In
the Senate, we will ensure that individ-
uals with preexisting conditions con-
tinue to have access to the care they
depend upon.

We will also safeguard Medicaid by
giving States more flexibility, while
ensuring that those who rely on this
program will not have the rug pulled
out from under them. States should
have the flexibility to design and oper-
ate Medicaid programs in a fiscally re-
sponsible way and not be stymied by
the Federal Government.

Making these critical reforms to
Medicaid will empower States with the
tools they need to implement
healthcare programs that best meet
their residents’ needs.

We must also ensure that those
Americans who have already relied on
this program will not be left in the lurch.
Republicans recognize our respon-
sibility to make sure that Medicaid con-
tinues to provide quality care for these
vulnerable citizens. We will balance
the needs of the individuals who have
Medicaid coverage, while ensuring sus-
tainability of the Medicaid Program.

Finally, we will free the American
people from the onerous ObamaCare
mandates that, in some cases, forced
to pay them to get sick. Without these
mandates, the American people—no Wash-
ton—back in charge of their
healthcare. This will be a huge leap in
the right direction for hard-working
families and small businesses.

Reforming America’s healthcare sys-
tem isn’t easy, but that doesn’t mean
we shouldn’t try. We have spent
years—literally years—debating this
issue, and we have had lots of ideas
along the way. Now it is time to take
action.

The core principles of the Republican
healthcare plan are as follows: helping
to stabilize collapsing insurance mar-
ks; improving the affordability of
health insurance; preserving access to
care for those with preexisting condi-
tions; safeguarding Medicaid for those
who need it the most; and freeing the
American people from onerous
ObamaCare mandates.

Without this meaningful action,
ObamaCare’s problems aren’t going
anywhere. Without action, the indi-
vidual market will continue to col-
apse, and more and more Americans
will be without insurance options.
Without action, Americans will con-
tinue to experience rising healthcare
costs because of the law’s costly taxes
and mandates. Without action, States
will continue to be hamstrung by Med-
icaid’s bureaucracy, and we will not be
able to put this critical program on a
more sustainable path for the folks
who need it the most. Without action,
the “Washington knows best” approach
to healthcare will live on.

We cannot let that happen, which is
why we plan to deliver patient-cen-
tered healthcare reforms that lower
costs and increase access to care for
the American people.

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. Tester. 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. Tester. Mr. President, we are
about to embark on something that is
pretty amazing to me. Next week, I am
told, we are going to take up the Sen-
ate healthcare bill that is going to be
one of the first pieces of the House bill.
There are a lot of things that are referred to
as putting lipstick on a pig, but this is
truly putting lipstick on a pig, where
we are going to take healthcare away
from millions of Americans.

We might make it a little better by
extending some Medicare or Medicaid
monies, but in the end that will go
away. We will potentially set up some
high-risk pools for people with pre-
exisitng condition like cancer, heart
disease, even high blood pressure, and,
quite frankly, would put many of our
rural hospitals at risk—at risk of
closure. This is irresponsible legisla-
tion that jeopardizes healthcare for over
250,000 Montanans, denying coverage
for over 150,000 Montanans who have a
pre-exisitng condition like cancer, heart
disease, even high blood pressure, and,
quite frankly, would put many of our
rural hospitals at risk—at risk of
closure.

For the very first time, we are seeing the
methods by which they deliver healthcare
to these rural communities, by the
way, that are hanging on by

June 20, 2017

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE
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their fingernails. This House bill is creating uncertainty in Montana, it is creating uncertainty across this Nation, it will fundamentally change our lives forever, and I do not believe it will be for the better. My rural area has received over 3,600 pieces of correspondence related to the American Health Care Act. Many Montanans are terrified of the implications of this horrible bill. As elected officials, we are obligated to answer the tough questions, defend our positions, and advocate for our constituents. That is not what is happening here. As a result, the Senate, through their secret meetings and through a potential rush-through healthcare bill next week—and I see no reason why it will not be—we are not doing right by our constituents.

The process and this bill are a disservice to folks like Julie Williams from smalltown Montana—Shepherd, MT. Julie was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, MS, in 2011. 5 months before the Supreme Court was set to make their decision on the Affordable Care Act. She spent those 5 months terrified that she was in for a constant fight with insurance companies over coverage. When the Supreme Court upheld the ACA, and Julie has insurance and doesn’t have to worry about being denied coverage if she moves, changes jobs, or—God forbid—becomes unemployed. That is gone now. The ACA is going away. I am going to tell you something. The Affordable Care Act isn’t perfect, but it has a lot of good things. Let’s fix the things wrong with it, and the progress we have made. But instead, we heard in Washington, particularly the Republican majority, is creating chaos in the marketplace and driving costs up. This chaos is putting our rural hospitals and community health centers at risk. That is not just the statement. That is a statement of fact.

Every day, folks in rural communities rely on their local hospitals, clinics, everything from basic checkup to emergency treatments. Thanks to Medicaid expansion, those hospitals and community health centers have seen a reduction in charity care, and they have been able to keep their doors open, but the American Health Care Act puts those funds at risk. I have to worry about medical centers on the chopping block. These medical professionals are sworn by oath to provide healthcare for folks. If Medicaid expansion goes away, the hospital will be forced to absorb those costs.

Over the last 10 months, I have held over a dozen listening sessions, eyeball-to-eyeball listening sessions with Montanans. We are going to be holding some more. The sessions have been over health. I have heard one thing loud and clear from people: If Medicaid expansion goes away, these rural frontier hospitals will have to fundamentally change how they deliver healthcare or they may be forced to close. These hospitals operate on razor-thin margins, and they cannot afford to see these funds disappear.

Take my hometown, Big Sandy, MT. Back in 1910, my grandfather came out, took a look around, saw grass as tall as the belly on a horse, and said: “This is where we are going to homestead.” He went back and got my grandmother. The farm that Sharla and I farm today was started, patented back in 1915. They built barns, they built homes, they built communities. They are the homesteaders of that area. They built barns, they built businesses, but it took them 50 years to build a hospital. In the mid-1960s, a hospital was finally built in Big Sandy. MT—50 years of people working together to get that hospital built.

I am going to tell you, if we don’t do smart things in this body, if we take steps backward and not very many—and this bill I have seen from the House is horrible, and I don’t think the bill in the Senate is going to be much better because it is a low bar. Hospitals like the hospital in Big Sandy will go away. I am going to tell you some thing, when that hospital goes away, Big Sandy goes away. Rural America goes away.

Big Sandy is just an example of hundreds of small towns in Montana and throughout this country that depend upon rural hospitals. Without hospitals, Montanans in frontier communities will be forced to travel 100 miles to deliver a baby or take an expensive ambulance ride after an accident. People are not going to be able to afford or they are not going to choose to live there because of a lack of healthcare. They are not going to take that risk. They are going to move out of those small towns, and they are going to move to places where they can have healthcare. In some cases, families who have lived in those houses and on that property for generations will be forced to move. These hospitals just don’t keep patients alive, they keep ministers on the pulpit. This bill would kill those rural hospitals and would be the death of rural America. That is not the only uncertainty facing rural America. In Montana, insurance companies filed their proposed rates with the insurance commissioners last year, but these insurers are left without vital information for their proposals. They don’t know if this administration will continue the cost-saving reduction payments that help make healthcare more affordable. Insurers have said if these payments go away, consumers will face double-digit rate increases. Montanans deserve to know from their elected officials what kind of impact this action has in a country where citizens can hold their government accountable, and the American people make good decisions when they have good information, but right now, a select few are shielding the American public from what is really going on. We hear about a bill that is going to impact one-sixth of the economy, we hear about a piece of legislation that will rip healthcare away from 23 million Americans, we hear about a bill that will take us back to the days when Montanans couldn’t afford to get sick, but we haven’t seen it.

Families across Montana are sitting at the kitchen table wondering if their healthcare coverage is going to go away. Folks are walking out of the doctors’ offices with newfound conditions and wondering: Will I be able to afford insurance? Will this action if similar to the American Healthcare Act be passed by the Senate? Children are being born prematurely, with asthma and cerebral palsy, and parents are left fearing their son or daughter will never be able to afford insurance.

These families deserve more from Congress. At a bare minimum, they deserve hearings. They deserve a panel of
experts discussing how we can lower premiums, reduce healthcare costs, and put transparency into prescription drugs. They deserve smart action, not political action. They deserve a Congress that will work together to improve the lives of all Americans, not one that works behind closed doors to draft secret legislation that will send shock waves through homes across this country.

Our Founders expected more from this body. Quite frankly, I expected more from my colleagues before I got here. Montanans expect their U.S. Senate to work for them.

I am going to leave you with one story. I was in Butte, MT, at one of my listening sessions. A gentleman was sitting at the table. He was probably 45 years old. He said: You know, I have two kids and I can’t work. I have had diabetes since I was a teenager. I have had some issues with mental health for a good portion of my adult life.

He said: I haven’t been able to work, haven’t been able to support my family, and then the Affordable Care Act came along, and the State of Montana was wise enough to pass Medicaid expansion. I was able to go to a doctor. I was able to get my diabetes handled because of Medicaid expansion. I was able to see a psychologist and get my mental health issues under control, and I was able to go back to work. I was able to support my family.

He said: And now you guys in Washington, DC, want to take all that away from me.

I will tell you, I will fight like hell to make sure that never happens. And if the majority leader wants to try to ram this down the people’s throats, I will spend the rest of my life telling them why and who did what to them. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor, like many of my colleagues, shocked at the Republican majority’s brazen, secretive effort to hijack the legislative process and pass a bill that would hurt millions of Americans.

I have served in public office for more than four decades, and never once in my 45 years as a mayor, a State legislator, a Congressman, or a Senator has it been so hard to understand the motivations of an opposing party. What kind of problems are Republicans trying to solve with legislation that raises premiums, reduces coverage, decimates Medicaid, and increases costs for everyone? Certainly not any of the concerns I have heard in New Jersey. Never has someone come up to me at the local diner to say that their premiums are too low or that Medicaid covers too many children or that cancer patients don’t pay enough out of pocket.

There is only one place in America where these bad ideas have any traction, and that is behind closed doors in Washington, where 13 Republican men are working on a secret bill to take healthcare away from millions of people and raise costs on millions and millions more. They want no transparency, no bipartisan input, no hearings.

Those are the same Republicans who in 2009 and 2010 accused Democrats of ramming healthcare reform through Congress too quickly. In fact, it was the majority leader who said at the time: “This massive piece of legislation that seeks to restructure one-sixth of our economy was written behind closed doors without input from anyone.” Even the Vice President—a Congressman at the time—said it is “wrong for legislation that will affect 100 percent of the American people to be negotiated behind closed doors without input from anyone.”

I sit on the Senate Finance Committee, I remember the process quite well. At the time, Senator Baucus, bending over backward to get Republican input, we held 53 meetings—hearings, roundtables, briefings, and negotiations—on healthcare reform. Afterward, in 2009 and 2010, the Finance Committee markup in over 20 years—a markup that led to the adoption of nearly a dozen Republican amendments, on top of the two dozen amendments we accepted before the markup began.

Democrats also made huge bipartisan overtures on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. They, too, held a transparent process and adopted over 160 Republican amendments—160 Republican amendments.

Then and only then did we bring the bill to the floor of the Senate, and when we did, we spent 25 consecutive days in session debating the bill on the Senate floor in front of the American people.

In short, Democrats spent months making compromise after compromise in the hopes of getting Republicans on board, only to learn that they never had any intention of working with us at all. They never cared about expanding access to care or reducing prescription drug costs for seniors or making insurance affordable. They didn’t work with us then, and they certainly are not working with us now.

Opposite? Behold! Last week, 13 Republican men are debating just how many millions of Americans will lose their coverage under this bill. Is it 23 million? Is it 20 million? Is it 16 million? Behind closed doors, they are discussing just how high the age tax should be on middle-aged workers. Is it $8,000 a year or $10,000 a year or $12,000 a year? Behind closed doors, they are picking and choosing which consumer protections to gut. Should they bring back lifetime limits on coverage, which is a real problem for those with serious disease? Before, there were lifetime limits. So you had coverage, and then all of a sudden, you hit that ceiling. If you had challenges, for example, with cancer, and you expended all of your coverage, you still had an illness that needed to be treated. Now you were one illness away from bankruptcy.

Would you let patients with pre-existing conditions swim in high-risk pools, allowing insurers to once again charge women more than men simply because they are women? Same age, same bracket, same geography.

It is easy to see why Republicans want to keep this bill out of the public eye. If it is anything like the House version passed earlier this year, it is going to be a terrible, mean-spirited bill—a bill that the Congressional Budget Office said would take insurance away from 23 million people. It would raise premiums by 20 percent a year and price middle-aged consumers out of the market. It is a bill that, according to reports, even President Trump said is too mean to tell you something. If a bill is too mean for President Trump, it is certainly too mean for New Jersey.

Today, I understand that a comment was attributed to the President. He was meeting with a group of business leaders. He says he wants a health bill with heart—with heart. I can tell you, it is not this bill because the House bill—and, from what I am hearing, behind closed doors, the potential Senate bill—is a heartless bill.

I am not the only one with that view. I was glad that most of my New Jersey colleagues in the House of Representatives rejected the House bill. Indeed, every House Democrat and nearly every House Republican in our delegation understood why this bill would devastate New Jersey.

This bill will price thousands of New Jerseyans out of the private health insurance market, especially those nearing retirement age. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, premiums for a 60-year-old worker who earns $20,000 a year in Monmouth County will see their premiums increase by 900 percent—900 percent. That is an increase of nearly $9,000.

Every day, New Jerseyans are reaching out to tell me what is at stake in this debate and what this secretive effort will mean for their health and their financial security. Take Dr. Howard Fredrics, a 54-year-old constituent from Park Ridge who emailed to say:

Without subsidies provided under the ACA, my 51-year-old wife and I would have no insurance... We could not afford premiums in excess of $1100 a month. Without these subsidies, millions will go uninsured and many of these people, myself included, will die.

Of course, my Republican colleagues like to say their plan will give Americans more choice. We don’t know what the plan is, but they keep saying—at least the House plan—we are going to give Americans more choice. But if all these choices are unaffordable, what good are they? What good is it to have “more choices” if you can’t afford any of the choices?
If they provide significantly less coverage, what good is it to say I have insurance when the moment I get sick, I don’t have the coverage for it? So I have been paying for a policy that doesn’t really help me at the moment I need it.

They also say their plan will give States more choice on how to run Medicaid. When you cut Medicaid by $800 billion, you leave States no choice but to scale back the health services they provide. That is not choice. That is not choice.

Leaving nursing home patients out in the cold, ending respite care for children with disabilities, denying low-income children a fair shot of the American dream—that is not choice.

New Jersey alone will face $30 billion in cuts to Medicaid over the next decade—cuts that will not only leave thousands of families uninsured but, according to the Milken Institute, will cost New Jerseyans more than 41,000 jobs. It is no wonder Senate Republicans are trying to hide this bill. It is a terrible, mean bill, and they don’t have the guts to tell the American people what is in it, even though they want to pass it next week. If only the had the courage that so many New Jerseyans have shown me in recent weeks as I have toured our State—hard-working Americans who have been willing to share their personal healthcare stories.

It is not easy to share a serious illness with everybody in the world, but so compelled are they and so courageous, I would add, that they do. People like Irma Rivera, a constituent I recently met in Jersey City, told me about her battle with uterine cancer nearly a decade ago. She was fortunate to survive, but without the Affordable Care Act, she would be blacklisted by health insurance companies for the rest of her life, simply because she is a survivor of that cancer. Today Irma is covered and receiving world-class care.

I also met with Samantha Williams, a young mother in Burlington City. She told me about her son’s brush with a life-threatening asthma attack. They were uninsured so they avoided going to the emergency room, as so many people do. The illness gets worse and worse, more consequential to your life, more consequential to the cost, but eventually his breathing got so bad, she had no choice. The doctor said if they had waited any longer, her son might have never made it. She credits Medicaid with saving his life.

I also want to know how my Republican colleagues can reconcile their concern with the opioid epidemic with their plan to end the Medicaid expansion that is saving so many lives. Just yesterday, I received an email from Irene in Oakhurst, NJ. She writes:

My daughter is a recovering drug addict on Medicaid. When you cut Medicaid by $800 billion, you leave States no choice but to scale back the health services they provide. That is not choice. That is not choice.

Imagine, just for a moment, how thrilled Americans would be if Republicans actually had a bill that solved some of their problems instead of bringing back old ones. Imagine how thrilled my Republican colleagues would be to show off a bill that improved, instead of endangered, people’s lives, but my Republican friends are not excited to show off this bill because when you are excited to show a bill—when you have a great product, you want the whole world to know about it. When you have a terrible product, you don’t want anyone to know about it, and they don’t want to defend it because they know it is indefensible.

For 7 years, my Republican colleagues put politics over policy. For 7 years, they demonized ObamaCare, with no substance behind their rhetoric. Now their poll-tested platitudes have caught up with them, and they know it. That is why they let 13 Senate Republicans—representing one-quarter of the country, meet behind closed doors, and that is why their hope is to keep this bill a secret until the very last minute.

Today I have come to the floor with a message for my Republican colleagues: If you want to have a debate about how to improve our healthcare system and about how to help more families get covered and about how to lower costs more and create a healthy, more productive nation, these are issues Democrats have been ready to have that debate on. I have said it in the Senate Finance Committee. We did remarkable things under the Affordable Care Act, but there is still room for improvement. We have that debate because Democrats know that while the Affordable Care Act was a historic law—a law that stopped insurance companies from dropping your coverage if you got sick, that covered 90 percent of Americans for the first time in our history, that required healthcare plans to cover essential health benefits like visits with specialists, prenatal care, mental health and addiction treatment, hospital stays, and preventive care—and that made us closer to universal coverage than we had ever been before. Imagine how thrilled Americans would be if Republicans proposed a bill that actually made us closer to universal coverage than we ever have been.

Before we can make our health system better, we must stop Republicans from making it worse. We cannot go back to a time when healthcare was a privilege granted only to those who could afford it, when it was always, I think, a right afforded to all Americans. The only way we can go forward is to have a fair debate, with full input, with open debate, with full transparency on an issue that affects virtually every American, in full view.
of the American people we were elected to serve. They deserve no less, but they are getting a lot less by the majority as it relates to this bill—behind closed doors, in secret, that even the President of the United States says is mean. The only thing I can agree with President Trump is we need a bill with a heart, and from what I have seen and heard so far, this is pretty heartless.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me thank my colleague from New Jersey for his excellent remarks on the Affordable Care Act and its future and really spotlight the point he made. He and I have been around legislatures for a long time, both at the local level, State level, and here in Washington. If you have something you are really proud of—a bill—you can’t wait to roll it out. We have a place for a press conference right here in the hallways of the Congressators around here. We have a press corps that fills the Gallery when they all show up, and they are anxious to hear our story. If you have something you are proud of—and each of has had that moment you put it in a press release and do the social media and the whole number.

If you are unfortunate to be in the position to bring a bill to the floor you are not very proud of—you don’t know how you can explain it back home—you keep it secret. You do it behind closed doors.

What the Senator has said is exactly the truth—and we know it, as our colleagues on the other side know it. They have, for the past several weeks, since the House passed their bill, been meeting behind closed doors. So 13 male Senators—why they couldn’t invite the American people. They have not produced one thing for their decision—I can’t understand. Yet, Senators—why they couldn’t invite the House to meet—why they didn’t invite the Senate to meet. The whole idea of this function is to keep it secret. You do it behind closed doors.

It isn’t just a secret bill we haven’t seen, it is a lot of Republican House Members who voted for it—and they are the ones who put it in a press release and said: I don’t want this taped. Well, here is a bill he voted for to change the healthcare system for the people he represents, including the folks in that room, and he didn’t want to be on the record or public about that discussion. That tells me a lot as well.

The second question is this: If you started with the position that you have something you are really proud of—a bill—you can’t wait to roll it out, that legislation—you put it in a press release and do the social media and the whole number. You are not very proud of—you don’t know what the Senate Republicans will come up with in response to that, but clearly it must be parallel or close to what the House of Representatives did.

Let’s take a close look at this measure and take a look at the history that brought us to this moment. As I mentioned, we still don’t have the text of the Republican measure because, you see, it is a lot of Republican House passage of the Affordable Care Act. Six years and counting, they can’t produce a replacement. It looks like we are going to vote on this in a few days. By congressional standards, this is a high crime and misdemeanor. To think of voting to consider a bill within 10 days affecting every American, affecting one-sixth of the American economy—a bill that will say to some people: You are going to lose your health insurance, and to others: We are going to offer you a health insurance policy that really isn’t worth the paper it is written on, and we haven’t seen the bill.

Well, what is the history of this? Is this the way the Republicans always operate? Not really. In December 2009, Republican Senator MCCONNELL, their leader, said, when we were debating the Affordable Care Act: “This massive piece of legislation that seeks to restructure one-sixth of our economy is being written behind closed doors without input from anyone in an effort to jam it past, not only the Senate, but the American people.” That was Senator MCCONNELL about the Affordable Care Act when it was being proposed by President Obama.

Well, what is the fact? During the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the Senate held over 50 bipartisan hearings on the bill. How many bipartisan hearings have we held on the new Republican healthcare proposal? None, not one.

At that time, 6 years ago, we had a week-long markup in the Finance Committee and a month-long markup in the HELP Committee. The Senate spent—and I remember this well—25 consecutive days in session on the floor of the Senate debating this bill. It is the second longest consecutive period of time ever spent on a bill in the Senate.

We considered on the floor of the Senate hundreds of amendments. You know, we ended up adopting 150 Republican amendments to the Affordable Care Act. Not a single one of them would vote for it, but we took their proposals to make it better seriously and adopted 150 changes.
How much of a chance will we have to amend the Senate Republican bill that may come before us as soon as this week? It remains to be seen. It could be what we call a vote-arama around here, which is a corruption of what this grand institution really stands for, which is the Ward of Operations for generations and centuries. The vote-arama lets you vote on an amendment offered to the bill, with 2 minutes of debate.

You are changing the healthcare system and you have 1 minute on each side to debate your amendment? Is that a serious undertaking with something that is consequential for so many Americans? No one has seen this secret bill—not Democrats, not many Republican Senators.

I asked Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price last week in a hearing: Have you seen the bill? You are the one that is going to have to implement it. He said: No, I haven’t seen it either.

This weekend the Presiding Officer, Senator Rubio, a Republican from Florida, said:

The Senate is not a place where you can cook up something behind closed doors and rush it to the floor.

Mr. President, I couldn’t agree more. Senator Ron Johnson, a Republican from Wisconsin, said:

I want to make sure the American people, I want to make sure the members of Congress have enough time to evaluate it. I want to have enough time to really take a look at what we’re voting on.

That was Republican Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin.

Senator Bob Corker, a Republican Senator from Tennessee, said:

I’ve said from Day 1 and I’ll say it again: The process is better if you do it in public. Obviously, that’s not the route that is being taken.

I didn’t pull these quotes from months and years ago. They are from the weekend. The comments were made over the weekend by Republican Members about their very own leadership and the process they are following in preparing to change America’s healthcare system.

Let’s talk about some numbers. Let’s start with zero. How many hearings have we had on the Senate bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act? Zero. How many markups have we had? Zero. How many times the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the man responsible for implementing this bill, spent on it to review it? Zero. How much Democratic input has been allowed for this secret negotiation? Zero. How many women Senators have been involved in crafting the bill? Zero. How many medical organizations or patient groups support the secret Senate bill? Zero. And most concerning of all, how much time has the public had to even read this bill? Zero.

Let’s take a look at another: 23 million. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 23 million Americans will lose their health insurance under the House-passed repeal bill—1 million in Illinois.

I have said it before, but I will say it again—and this is a driving factor in terms of my views on the subject: If you have ever in your life been the parent of a very ill child and didn’t have health insurance, you will never forget it as long as you live. I know. I have been there.

I was a law student, newly married, with a brand new baby girl with a real serious illness. I had no health insurance. My wife and I sat in the charity section at Children’s Hospital waiting for them to call our name so we could take our little girl in to the latest resident, with a hundred questions and who wanted to go through them all over again. I thought to myself: Durbin, how did you ever reach this point where you don’t have health insurance?

I fixated on health insurance from that point forward. From the time I became a member of Congress, the opioid crisis after I had been a Senator for five years.

Here is another number: 750. Lower income older Americans might see their premiums increase 750 percent under the House-passed repeal bill, from $1,700 under ACA to $14,000 under the Republican plan. How can we have a serious health policy when people can’t come up with $14,000 in 1 year?

We want to take health insurance away from 23 million Americans? Do you want it to be your family, your son, your daughter? I sure wouldn’t.

Here is another number: 750. Lower income older Americans might see their premiums increase 750 percent under the House-passed repeal bill, from $1,700 under ACA to $14,000 under the Republican plan. Now, how can this happen? How can you see the premium increase that fast? We built into the affordable care bill a guaranteed protection for disparity in premium payments of no more than three to one. The most expensive health insurance policy cannot be more than three times the lowest cost policy. The Republicans changed that to five to one. Well, who does that affect?

If you are between 50 and 64 years of age, you are in a category of people not yet eligible for Medicare. If you are now facing chronic illnesses that could make health insurance more expensive, you will pay the higher premiums. The higher premiums, when calculated, are dramatically higher for this group. That is why the American Association of Retired Persons came out four-square against the Republican TrumpCare, the Republican repeal bill. It is just unfair to those between the ages of 50 and 64.

Some 130 million, that is how many people nationwide have preexisting conditions. Almost half of the people in Illinois have a preexisting condition. I am in that category. What does that mean for you? To buy health insurance with a preexisting condition, you are charged more, if you could buy insurance at all.

So when the Republican bill that passed the House does not guarantee, as the Affordable Care Act, that you cannot be discriminated against because of a preexisting condition, it makes millions of Americans—130 million—more vulnerable.

Is that what they wanted to achieve?

Where you stand depends on where you start. If you think everyone is entitled to health insurance, then you can’t be standing for something that would discriminate. Not to be used against you. A lot of the people whom I am talking about have employer insurance, but what about those who shop on the individual market or purchase individual insurance in the future? Under the House repeal bill, insurers would, once again, be allowed to charge people with preexisting conditions more money for insurance.

The next number is 33,000. Senator Menendez referred to it. That is how many people are dying every year because of the opioid crisis. Even though that is 33,000, 1,800 is a year in Illinois.

Now, listen to this. The Republican bill dramatically cuts the Medicaid Program, the Nation’s largest provider of substance abuse treatment services, and allows insurers, once again, to refuse coverage for those needed services.

I have been here a few years, and I can remember that desk because that is where Paul Wellstone of Minnesota sat. I remember that desk because that is where Pete Domenici of New Mexico sat. You couldn’t ask for two more polar opposites politically. Paul Wellstone was a garrulous, proud liberal. Pete Domenici was a proud conservative. One was from Minnesota, and one was from New Mexico, and they came together on an issue.

Do you know what the issue was? Each of them had someone they loved in their family who suffered from a mental illness, and both knew that wouldn’t think the Republicans would in any way change the world will health insurance companies refuse to write coverage for people with mental illness? They fought for years against the insurance companies, and they finally won.

We included, in the Affordable Care Act, the requirement that your health insurance policy cover not only physical illness but mental illness. It was a breakthrough. For the first time, we stopped treating mental illness like a condition for which people get on the charity section at Children’s Hospital and don’t get treated it like an illness that could be treated.

They added a section at the end that most of us didn’t even notice: mental illness and substance abuse treatment. I didn’t know it was there until the opioid crisis, and I started going to those rehab facilities and meeting people to these people there: How are you paying for this care? Some of them were under Medicaid, but those under private health insurance said: My policy covers it. It covered because Wellstone and Domenici insisted on putting it in.

After that historic victory, you would think the Republicans would include mental illness and substance
abuse treatment as one of the basic essential services for health insurance, but they don’t.

When they say we are going to write a bill that gives Americans more choice in their health insurance—oh, that is the case. There are other options if they are worried. Are you worried about whether you want mental illness and substance abuse treatment or you don’t?

Well, from where I am sitting, that is the kind of insurance coverage that should be no worry. We have made sure that 6 years from now is going to be struggling with an addiction. At that point, you better hope that your health insurance policy has some coverage so that you can save her life and bring her back from that addiction.

Now, 280,000 is the next number. That is how many children in Illinois depend on Medicaid for school-based health and medical services, from feeding tubes to special buses to special education teachers. I made a point this last week when I was home to visit the schools in Chicago and Bloomington and hear firsthand what cuts in Medicaid meant to local school districts.

Many of the students don’t realize this, but the kids with whom you are dealing who have learning disabilities and other disabilities, many of them are supported at your local schools by Medicaid dollars. The Medicaid dollars pay for the counselors, pay for the special buses, and pay for the feeding tubes for these kids to survive. So when you make a dramatic cut in Medicaid, as the Republican bill that came out of the House does, you endanger the very services and the very benefits that these special ed kids need. The school districts are mandated by law to help these kids, but if the money is cut off from Medicaid, what are they going to do?

The Republican repeal bill that every Republican Congressman in my State voted for slashes $10 billion in Medicaid funding to Illinois, including money to school districts.

Three—this is the most important single number in the next 10 days in the Senate—3. That is the number of Republican Senators needed to stop this. Surely, there are three Republican Senators who are concerned enough about this secret, behind-closed-doors process that we are witnessing—anything else comes to rewriting health care in America—at least three Republican Senators who want to take time to properly review this legislation that affects one-sixth of our economy.

Just the Senators who have publicly stated that they don’t support this process—if the three of them would come together, we could stop this and do it the right way.

I said privately to a Republican Senator last week, after the tragedy where a Republican Congressman was shot at a baseball practice: Isn’t this the moment when we ought to get together quietly—Democrats and Republicans—when we ought to sit down and write a bill we can both be proud of? I am hoping he was listening.

I am hoping that three Republican Senators, if they stand up for it, will help us achieve that goal. Surely there are other Republicans who are worried about the kids in their States like I am worried about the kids in mine, who do not want to make the opioid epidemic any worse, who want to make certain—underline the word “certain”—that they are protecting the people they represent from discrimination because of preexisting conditions. Surely there are at least three Republican Senators who do not want to throw millions of Americans off of health insurance coverage. Maybe some of the Senators who represent States that have been ravaged by the opioid epidemic will step forward. There are a lot of them. It only takes three to change this.

To Republican Senators, I say: Do not do this. Do not do this secret process. Democrats are willing to work with you to improve our healthcare system. I have said before that the only place I have that I know of was carried down a number on clay tablets by Senator Moses. All of the other efforts can use some work, and in this case, we are willing to work with you. Take repeal off the table, and we will put a chair up to the table.

Over the past week, I have received thousands of emails and letters from Illinoisans who are worried about what is happening in the Senate today.

Helen, from Crest, IL, is 47 years old. She is a primary caregiver for her parents. Her mom has Alzheimer’s and is in a nursing home. Here is what Helen writes:

Just before Thanksgiving, my dad’s health deteriorated. He is now in hospice in the same nursing home. I have spent all of their savings—my mom and dad’s savings—on healthcare. My mom is finally eligible for Medicaid. Without Medicaid, I would need to bring my parents to my home and quit my job to personally nurse them myself because the deductibles are too high. Addi-

tional worries about my parents was the Affordable Care Act would work in the future. It is a way to give an answer to the obvious question of why they are claiming so many people with preexisting conditions from guaranteed coverage.

The last note is from Erin of Chicago, who writes:

I implore you to force a public hearing on the ACA repeal that the Republicans are trying to sneak through. From what I understand, many of my friends and family will lose coverage either due to preexisting conditions or because the deductibles are too high. Additionally, many of my parents’ friends and getting older. Under the proposed act, their health insurance premiums will likely increase by $15,000 a year. They cannot afford it. They just can’t. They will not have coverage, will get sick, and be unable to afford care.

If the Republicans have a better idea than the Affordable Care Act, for goodness sake, stop talking about it from the American people. Stop talking about it behind closed doors. If it is such a good idea, bring it out for the world to take a look at. There will be critics. There were certainly critics with regard to the Affordable Care Act. I remember that very well. Yet that is what this body is all about.

The Senate is supposed to be a place where we deliberate on the important issues of our time. Is there anything more important than your health, the health of the people whom you love, and your opportunity to get basic healthcare so that you can protect them?

I implore the Republicans and those who know that this is the wrong way to go to stand up and say so. It only takes three Republican Senators to do this a much different way so as to bring credit to this institution and create a bill—create a change—that makes healthcare more affordable, more accessible, and more fair to all Americans.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

MR. WICKER. Mr. President, before beginning my remarks about the importance of the health of the people whom you love, and your opportunity to get basic healthcare so that you can protect them?

I implore the Republicans and those who know that this is the wrong way to go to stand up and say so. It only takes three Republican Senators to do this a much different way so as to bring credit to this institution and create a bill—create a change—that makes healthcare more affordable, more accessible, and more fair to all Americans.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

USS FITZGERALD TRAGEDY

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, before beginning my remarks about the requirement for a larger Navy, I do want to extend my deepest condolences to the loved ones of those who lost their lives aboard the USS Fitzgerald recently.

During Saturday morning’s early hours, the USS Fitzgerald—a guided-
missile destroyer—collided with a Filipino merchant ship off the coast of Honshu, Japan. The USS Fitzgerald sustained significant damage, including the rapid flooding of three compartment areas, and seven sailors lost their lives. These young Americans were on board because they chose to serve their country, and they are heroes whose names will be added to the list of those who will be forever honored by our country.

Questions remain about the collision, and I am hopeful that they will be answered soon. Administrative and safety investigations into this tragedy are already underway, but we cannot change the horrific turn of events that occurred at 2 a.m. off the coast of Japan.

Our hearts go out to the loved ones who are dealing with the grief this accident has caused. We wish a quick recovery for those who were injured, and our gratitude goes to the many sailors who acted swiftly and resolutely to save lives and prevent further damage aboard.

Does the distinguished majority leader wish me to yield for some business? Mr. McConnel. If the Senator would yield so that I may do wrapup here.

Mr. Wicker. I would be delighted. Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished majority leader. Mr. McConnel. I thank the Senator.

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO JOAN B. CLAYBROOK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments to acknowledge my friend, Joan Claybrook. Joan is a legend. She is one of the most effective champions this Nation has ever seen—and she is still leading the charge. Last week, Joan celebrated her 80th birthday, and one thing is clear, Joan Claybrook isn’t slowing down.

Like so many bright young people in Washington, Joan began her career right here in the U.S. Congress, working for Senator Walter Mondale and Representative James Mackay as a congressional fellow. In the summer of 1966, the Senate unanimously passed the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act, the first major legislation to improve auto safety in this country. This effort was led by consumer advocate, Ralph Nader, and working right by his side was Joan Claybrook. It led to important safety standards we take for granted today: seatbelts, windshield wipers, outside mirrors, and dashboards. This landmark legislation also launched Joan’s impressive career as a consumer advocate.

During the Carter administration, Joan served as the head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, where she led efforts to improve vehicle safety and increased consumer access to safety information. Prior to her time with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, she ran Congress Watch, worked for the Public Interest Research Group, National Traffic Safety Bureau, Social Security Administration, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

In 2009, Joan retired as president of Public Citizen, after nearly three decades of service championing consumer interests and campaigning on issues from campaign finance reform, to truck safety, and business regulation. Among her many accolades at Public Citizen, Joan was able to limit the number of triple- and longer double-trailer trucks on the road, and she helped to establish national safety and environmental agencies were able to continue its important work protecting the American people, but her proudest, and perhaps most impactful, achievement was winning a 20-year battle with the auto industry to install airbags in cars. Because of Joan’s work, countless lives have been saved. I want to thank her for these contributions that improved the health and safety for so many across the country.

Joan Claybrook was honored by numerous organizations, including the Philip Hart Distinguished Consumer Service Award from the Consumer Federation of America, an Excellence in Public Service Award from the Georgetown University Law Center, and an award for Superior Achievement from the National Traffic Safety Bureau—just to name a few. In her precious spare time, Joan serves on the board of Citizens for Tax Justice and Public Citizen. She also cochaired the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety and Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways.

It is not simply Joan Claybrook’s extraordinary resume that earned her such great respect; it was her approach to the job. Joan brought humility, integrity, and fairness to every challenge she faced. Her energy, passion, and optimism are infectious, and her continued drive to help Americans have the chance to lead safe and equitable lives make her an inspiration. Joan may have retired, but her commitment to those values has never wavered. She is a force of nature.

I will close with this. I strongly believe in the role of public service to create change and make a difference. Joan Claybrook’s years of service reflect these values and prove that, with the right approach, change is possible. I am lucky to count Joan as a friend. It is with great pride that I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Joan Claybrook’s 80th birthday and congratulate her on an outstanding career. I hope Joan enjoys this special day, and I wish her many more wonderful years.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in Vermont, we believe in forging resilient communities through strong local governments and in fostering well-informed leaders to understand and respond to the many complex issues facing us today. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns, VLCT, embodies these principles and more, and I am delighted to contribute in honoring the league and its members on its 50th anniversary.

Established in 1967, the VLCT was created to help improve local government. Local officials needed a way to help towns best serve their constituents and to connect members of their communities with their local governments. In response, a handful of municipalities formed the organization that provided these services. Beginning with VLCT’s first executive director and continuing through today, this organization has consistently worked to represent the values of all Vermonters.

For the first time in 1995, every city and town in Vermont had joined as members of VLCT, demonstrating how valuable this institution is for all of our communities regardless of their size.

For many years, I too have worked alongside VLCT to improve the lives of Vermonters. Whether through their efforts supporting the State’s recovery from Tropical Storm Irene or improving the water quality of Vermont’s rivers and streams, their dedication to Vermont’s way of life and quality of life makes us all better. They provide direction and advice and support our municipalities in their timely and important but often underfunded responsibilities.

As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, VLCT will always be there to support us, to support Vermont communities. Our great State is made better by the involvement of organizations like the VLCT, and I wish them continued success for the next 50 years in bettering the lives of all Vermonters.

CBO COST ESTIMATE—S. 512

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, in compliance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Environment and Public Works has obtained from the Congressional Budget Office an estimate of the costs of S. 512, the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act, as reported from the committee on May 25, 2017.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cost estimate be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 512—NUCLEAR ENERGY INNOVATION AND MODERNIZATION ACT

As reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on May 25, 2017

SUMMARY

S. 512 would direct the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)—which regulates the use of radioactive materials at civilian facilities such as nuclear reactors—to
undertake certain activities related to establishing a regulatory framework for licensing nuclear reactors that use advanced technologies for either commercial or research-related purposes. The bill would also modify the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's authority to charge fees to entities that the agency regulates and would authorize the Department of Energy (DOE) to provide grants to developers of advanced nuclear technologies to help pay for the costs of developing and licensing such technologies. Finally, S. 512 would amend existing law regarding the disposition of excess uranium materials managed by DOE.

CBO estimates that implementing S. 512 would cost $386 million over the 2018–2022 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Pay-as-you-go procedures apply because enacting the bill would affect direct spending; however, CBO estimates that any such effects would be insignificant. Enacting S. 512 would not affect revenues.

CBO estimates that enacting S. 512 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

S. 512 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary effect of S. 512 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 270 (energy).

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</table>

Note: NRC = Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
* CBO estimates that enacting the bill would have no significant effect on direct spending.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that S. 512 will be enacted at the start of fiscal year 2018 and that amounts estimated to be necessary will be provided at the start of each year. CBO’s estimates are based on historical spending patterns for affected activities. Advanced Nuclear Energy Licensing Cost-Share Grants S. 512 would authorize DOE to provide grants to developers of advanced nuclear technologies to accelerate the development, licensing, and commercial deployment of those technologies. Such grants would be available for a range of costs related to those efforts, including fees charged by the NRC for licensing-related activities. Based on an analysis of information from DOE, CBO estimates that spending for such assistance under S. 512 would require appropriations totaling $450 million over the 2018–2022 period. That estimate is in line with the total amount of funding provided by the Congress for a six-year effort, now largely completed, to support the development, certification, and licensing of small modular reactors (a type of advanced nuclear technology). Assuming that the cost of those activities, CBO estimates that outlays would total $340 million over the 2018–2022 period and $110 million after 2022.

Accelerated NRC Activities Funding for the NRC—which totals approximately $1 billion in 2017—is provided in annual appropriation acts. Under current law, Congress is required to recover most of its funding through fees charged to licensees and applicants; CBO estimates that such fees, which are classified as discretionary offsetting collections, will total nearly $800 million this year.

S. 512 would require the NRC to establish a regulatory framework for licensing advanced nuclear reactors, defined in the bill as reactors that involve significant technological improvements relative to those currently being constructed. The bill specifies that any funding provided to the NRC for activities related to developing that framework would be excluded from the portion of the agency’s budget that is offset by fees the NRC collects. Based on an analysis of information from the NRC about the anticipated costs of establishing the proposed licensing regime within the timeframe specified by the bill, CBO estimates that implementing S. 512 would cost $46 million over the 2018–2022 period, mostly for salaries and expenses for technical experts required to develop the necessary analyses and regulations.

In addition, S. 512 would authorize DOE to establish a six-year, $450 million effort, now largely completed, to support the expedited development, licensing, and commercial deployment of advanced nuclear technologies. Because those provisions are substantively the same and the estimated costs of implementing those provisions are the same in both bills, the estimated increase in spending subject to appropriation under S. 512 is greater than under S. 97 because the estimate for S. 512 includes additional costs for the NRC to meet new requirements specified by that bill.

PAY-A-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS

S. 512 would amend existing law regarding the disposition of uranium materials managed by DOE. Under the bill, DOE would be required to develop plans for marketing those materials and to comply with annual limits on the volume of uranium materials purchased and placed into commercial markets. Specifically, the bill would cap sales and transfers at 2,100 metric tons per year through 2025 and at 2,700 metric tons starting in 2026. The bill also would authorize DOE to market materials derived from depleted uranium, which is one of the by-products of the uranium enrichment process.

According to DOE, uranium sales and transfers averaged about 2,450 metric tons a year over the 2012–2015 period, but fell to 2,100 metric tons in 2016. Using information from studies done for the department on uranium markets, CBO estimates that the quantity of uranium that will be disposed of the 2016–2017 period under current law probably will remain below 2,100 metric tons a year. Thus, CBO estimates that the caps on sales and transfers of uranium materials in S. 512 would have no significant effect on offsetting receipts from those activities over the 2018–2027 period. (Under current law, CBO estimates that the total of those materials will total about $800 million over the 2018–2027 period; however, CBO expects that only a portion of that value, or $80 million, will be deposited in the Treasury as offsetting receipts because of uncertainty surrounding DOE’s budgetary treatment of these transactions.)

INCREASE IN LONG-TERM DIRECT SPENDING AND DEFICITS

CBO estimates that enacting S. 512 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.
June 20, 2017

Mr. ENGEL: I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

The PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENGEL. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD following my remarks. I look forward to Mr. Engel's response.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary.
create the Cultural Insight Council. This self-directed, interdepartmental workgroup is comprised of employees from diverse backgrounds, representing all levels of the organization.

Under his stewardship as county administrator for Kent County, Mr. Delabbio’s tenure, from the construction of Millennium Park and the Kent County courthouse, to the expansion of the Kent County jail and the transition of the county Department of Aeronautics to a regional airport authority. Mr. Delabbio has worked with over 60 elected Kent County commissioners and is held in the highest regard by his peers around the country and globe. He has served as a regional vice president of the International City County Management Association, an organization with over 9,000 members worldwide, as well as a board member on many other organizations, including the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, Experience Grand Rapids, and The Right Place, Inc.

Mr. Delabbio holds a bachelor of science degree in political science and master of management from Aquinas College, as well as a master of public administration from Wayne State University and a Ph.D. from Western Michigan University. He has been an adjunct professor at Davenport University and plans to continue teaching and sharing his expertise with others in his retirement.

Mr. Delabbio’s colleagues in Kent County have praised him for work that has embodied what it means to be a public servant: resourceful, thoughtful, creative, and dedicated. Mr. Delabbio’s decades of work have set the standard for excellence and integrity for municipal managers throughout the State of Michigan, while mentoring many others who share his passion for public service. Those that know him will also attest that Mr. Delabbio is a humble man of impeccable character.

I am honored to ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Daryl Delabbio for his decades of public service to the citizens of Kent County, MI. His selfless, quiet leadership has left behind a legacy of growth and achievement that will benefit them for decades to come.

REMEMBERING JOHN BERLIN MCCAUNTS

Mr. SCOTT, Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize and honor the life of a dear friend and a true American hero, Mr. John Berlin McCants of Goose Creek, SC.

He was elected to a seat on the Goose Creek City Council where he served for an outstanding 24 years. John was a lifetime leader with a compassionate spirit. He dedicated so much of his life helping those who cannot help themselves. For that, he will be remembered not only as dedicated public servant, but also an inspiration to so many people around South Carolina.

I can tell you that he certainly had a positive impact on my life. John was my political mentor. He taught me the ABC’s of being a public servant and a public servant who remains committed to the greater good of our State and country.

The A stands for personal accountability. John taught me that, as a Member, I should always be accountable for my decisions and choices. B is for backbone. John once told me that we seldom find that Members have backbones, and that it is critical for me to use it when necessary, to stand up for what is right. C is for common sense. He taught me that it is important to not let fear and political ideology deter me from common sense. These great lessons stick with me everyday as I walk the halls of the U.S. Capitol and make decisions on behalf of South Carolina and the entire Nation.

Simply put, John was a great person and a mentor to many; I am thankful to have known him. He truly did represent the very best of our State. To Christine, his wife, and their wonderful family, John is forever in our hearts, and I would like to add his legacy to our June 20, 2017, Congressional Record.

REMEMBERING HAROLD HAUGLAND

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor an American hero. Frank McCauley passed away last week peacefully in Hamilton, MT. Frank was the oldest living fighter pilot ace from World War II.

He originally joined the Army at the beginning of America’s entry into the war, but quickly then turned to the Air Force where he discovered his passion and skill as one of our Nation’s first fighter pilots.

Frank flew his P-47 fighter “Rat Racer” on 46 missions while supporting B-17 bombers in the European Theatre, and he is credited with shooting down five and a half Nazi aircrafts. For this, he received a Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and four Air Medals.

In 2015, Frank and his family were flown to Washington, DC, and he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor that Congress can bestow on an individual for his service during World War II.

After leaving the Air Force, Frank had three sons—Craig, Kirk, and Kevin—and he built a life on the west coast with a successful career in the construction business. In 1974, Frank retired, married the love of his life, Bobbie, and moved to the Bitterroot Valley in western Montana.

It was in Montana where Frank and Bobbie enjoyed the retirement years by traveling in their motor home and organizing numerous parties for their friends, family, and neighbors.

name did not appear on any prisoner of war lists, and no returning soldiers reported him as a prisoner of war. The U.S. Army declared him deceased as of December 31, 1953.

In 1954, a number of remains were recovered from north of the Korean Demilitarized Zone. However, Harold’s remains were not included and he was declared nonrecoverable. After his death, Harold was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroism and leadership.

During a joint recovery operation in 2004, Harold’s remains were found in a mass grave on the eastern bank of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. Thanks to recent technological advancements in forensic science, the U.S. Department of Defense positively identified one of the individuals as Harold Haugland. After nearly 66 years, an American hero has been brought home to Montana for a full and proper military burial.

Harold represents the very best that this Nation has to offer with his profound bravery and dedication to service. Like many before him and after him, Harold paid the ultimate sacrifice to protect the freedoms that make the United States the greatest Nation in the world.

To Harold and his family, on behalf of myself, Montana, and a grateful Nation, I extend our deepest thanks for Harold’s service, sacrifice, and valor.

REMEMBERING FRANK MCCAULEY

Mr. TESTER, Mr. President, today I wish to honor an American hero.
Frank McCauley embodies the Great-est Generation, and he is a symbol for the American dream.

He is survived by his wife, Bobbie McCauley; sons, Craig, Kirk, and Kevin; stepdaughter, Nancy Cook; and numerous grandchildren, great-grand-children, and great-great-grand-children.

To ensure Frank’s life story is pre-served and to honor the contributions he has made to our country, I am proud to enshrine his story in the Congress-

ional Record.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the President Of-ficer before the Senate referred as indi-cated:

accompanying papers, reports, and doc-uments, and were referred as indicated:

EC–197. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Program Acquisition Unit Cost (PAUC) for the Chemical Demilitarization—Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA) Program;” to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–198. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readi-ness) transmitting, pursuant to law, the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) 2016 Accreditation Report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–199. A communication from the Acting Administrator of the Specialty Crops Pro-gram, Agricultural Marketing Service, De-partment of Agriculture, transmitting, pur-suant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Changes to Reporting and Notification Require-ments and Other Clarifying Changes for Imported Fruits, Vegetables, and Specialty Crops” (Docket No. AMS–SC–16–0083) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–191. A communication from the Secre tary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Whistleblower Awards Process” (RIN0338–E590) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–194. A communication from the Acting Administrator of the Specialty Crops Pro-gram, Agricultural Marketing Service, De-partment of Agriculture, transmitting, pur-suant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Marketing Order Regulating the Handling of Spearmint Oil Produced in the Far West; Salable Quantities and Allotment Percent-ages for the 2017–2018 Marketing Year” (Docket No. AMS–SC–16–0107) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–195. A communication from the Acting Administrator of the Livestock, Poultry, and Seed Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Promotion and Research Rules and Regulations” (Docket No. AMS–LPS–15–0084) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–196. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), trans-mitting, pursuant to law, a semiannual re-port entitled, “Acceptance of Contributions for Defense Programs, Projects, and Activi-ties; Defense Cooperation Account” and a semiannual listing of personal property con-trIBUTED by coalition partners; to the Com-mittee on Armed Services.
"Safety Zone; Lower Mississippi River, Vidalia, LA" (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0451) received in the Office of the President of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1936. 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; PUSH Beaver County/Beaver River, Miles 8 to 9, Beaver, PA” (Docket No. USCG–2017–0309) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1937. 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 Zones; Coast Guard Sector Ohio Valley Annual and Recurring Safety Zones Update” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0011) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1938. 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; Upper Mississippi River, Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0300) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1939. 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, Philadelphia, PA” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0075) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1940. 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, Philadelphia, PA” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0075) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1941. 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; Chicago River, Chicago, IL” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0397) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1942. 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; Washington, DC, Heli Pad; Chantilly, VA” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0248) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1943. 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; Columbia River, Goble, OR” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0488) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1944. 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; Navy Underwater Detonation (UNDET) Exercise, Apra Outer Harbor, GU” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0412) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1945. 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; Hope Chest Buffalo Niagara Dragon Boat Festival, Buffalo River, Buffalo, NY” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0278) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1946. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Special Local Regulation; Motor City Mile; Detroit River, Detroit, MI” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0372) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1947. 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; East River and Buttermilk Channel, Brooklyn, NY” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0401) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1948. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report entitled “Global Posture Reassessment: Global Posture Reassessment Plan” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0401) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1949. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Spirtotetramat; Pesticide Tolerances” (FRL No. 9961–95) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1950. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Isotetramid; Pesticide Tolerances” (FRL No. 9961–80) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1951. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Cumene Sulfonic Acid and its Ammonium, Sodium and Zink salts; Exemptions from the Requirement of a Tolerance” (FRL No. 9961–68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1952. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Evaluation of the TRICARE Program for fiscal year 2016; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1953. 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 (Washington County, IN, et al.)” (44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2017–0002) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1954. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Wassenaar Arrangement 2015 Plenary Agreements Implementation, Removal of National Technical Information, and Information Security Updates: Corrections” (RIN0694–AG56) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1955. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Economic Development Administration - Inspections, Tests, Analyses, and Acceptance Criteria” (NURGC–0080, Section 14.13.12) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1956. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; Update to Materials Incorporated by Reference” (FRL No. 9963–48–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1957. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approvals; TN; Prong 4–2010 Nonattainment Area; and 2010 Nonattainment Area; and 2010 Nonattainment Area” (FRL No. 9961–19–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1958. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Clean Air Act Requirements for Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance and Nonattainment Source Reviews” (FRL No. 9962–48–Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1959. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Clean Air Act Requirements for Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance and Nonattainment Source Reviews” (FRL No. 9962–48–Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1960. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan; Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; District Source Permits” (FRL No. 9962–57–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1961. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Effluent Limitations Guidelines and
Standards for the Dental Category” (FRL No. 9957–10–OW) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1962. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of a rule entitled “Administrative, Procedural, and Miscellaneous” (Rev. Proc. 2017–54) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1963. 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 “Announcement of the FY 2017 Phase III Allocation Round of the Qualifying Gasification Project Program” (Announcement 2017–06) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1964. A communication from the Executive Secretary, Foreign-Trade Zones Board, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Foreign-Trade Zones in the United States” (RIN06025-A168) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1965. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of a group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the Secretary of State (OSSB–2017–0028); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.


EC–1968. A communication from the Inspector General of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General’s Semiannual Report for the period from October 1, 2016, through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1969. A communication from the Chairman of the Board of Governors, U.S. Postal Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Inspector General’s Semiannual Report for October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.


EC–1971. A communication from the Chief of the Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Expanded Delegation Authority for Procedures Related to Representation of Claimants’ Interests in OIA” received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

EC–1973. A communication from the Acting Deputy Administrator, Office of Fishery Programs, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone of Alaska: Purpor (FISHERIES) Using Pot Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska” (RIN0648–XFS33) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1974. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act” (RIN0648–AY15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

- By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with amendments: H.R. 491, a bill to expand the boundary of Fort Frederick National Monument in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–114).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

- By Mr. McCain for the Committee on Armed Services.
  - Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Ronald J. Place, to be Major General.
  - Navy nomination of Capt. William C. Greene, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).
  - Navy nomination of Capt. William S. Dillon, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).
  - Navy nomination of Capt. Karl O. Thomas, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).
  - Navy nomination of Capt. Samuel J. Paparo, Jr., to be Rear Admiral (lower half).
  - Navy nomination of Capt. Gregory N. Harris, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).
  - Army nomination of Col. John P. Lawlor, Jr., to be Brigadier General.
  - Army nomination of Col. Dion B. Moten, to be Brigadier General.
  - Navy nomination of Col. Bowman T. Bowles III, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).
  - Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Daniel J. MacDonnell, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).
  - Navy nominations beginning with Capt. Eugene A. Burcher and ending with Capt. Ryan F. Rodriguez were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.
  - Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Keith M. Jones, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).
  - Navy nominations beginning with Capt. Bryan M. Lowe and ending with Capt. John R. Hendrickson were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.
  - Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Brett C. Batchelder, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).
  - Navy nominations beginning with Capt. Matthew A. Zirkle and ending with Capt. Eric J. Holcomb were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.
  - Army nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. Steven W. Ainsworth and ending with Col. Irene M. Zuppi, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.
  - Army nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. Jeffrey L. Kent, to be Rear Admiral (lower half), and ending with Brig. Gen. Andrew P. Schafer, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.
  - Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Christopher P. Callahan, to be Major General.
  - Army nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. James P. Begley and ending with Brig. Gen. Gary S. Yapel, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.
  - Army nominations of Rear Adm. (lh) Ann M. Burkhardt, to be Rear Admiral.
  - Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Andrew L. Lewis, to be Vice Admiral.
  - Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Matthew J. Kohen, to be Lieutenant General.
  - Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Kevin M. Donegan, to be Vice Admiral.
  - Navy nomination of Vice Adm. James G. Fogg III, to be Admiral.

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

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

Air Force nomination of JereD N. Frye, to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Christopher R. Boney and ending with Daniel D. Reyes, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Air Force nomination of Jeffrey A. Garrett, to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Roger A. Lee and ending with Jeffrey R. Rosenberry, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Air Force nomination of Theadore L. Wilson, to be Colonel.
Air Force nomination of Jason S. Cross, to be Major.

Air Force nomination of Angela M. Mike, to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Matthew V. Chauviere and ending with Lauren A. May, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Michael E. Bruhn and ending with Victor D. Weeden, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with James G. Adams and ending with Charles C. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Shawn G. Denihan and ending with Chad A. Runyon, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Kelvin J. Askew and ending with Erika L. Berry, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Kathleen A. Allen and ending with Christopher Frye, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Maj. Adria R. Schneck, to be Captain.

Air Force nominations beginning with Collette M. Murphy and ending with John A. Robinson III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Mary A. Ponce and ending with Ryan K. Reed, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Joseph T. Bailey and ending with Jonpaul Stefan, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with David W. Shaileb, to be Captain.

Air Force nominations beginning with Lee A. Axtell and ending with Mark S. Winward, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Thomas M. Bestafka and ending with Francis J. Stavish, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Danny W. King, to be Captain.

Air Force nominations beginning with Babak A. Barakat and ending with Stephen M. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Michael J. Allanson and ending with Gerard J. White, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Matthew L. Beran and ending with Ian S. Wexler, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Garland H. Andrews and ending with Meredith L. Yoager, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Oladapo A. Akintonde and ending with Ramey L. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jeff A. Bleie and ending with Jeffrey G. Zeller, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Grady G. Duffey, Jr. and ending with David A. Vondrak, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Daniel E. Fillon and ending with Jason D. Weddle, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Damon B. Dixon and ending with Jonathan J. Vorrath, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Todd M. Boland and ending with Karl C. Swindle, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with James W. Adkisson III and ending with Sherrill A. Zimmerman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Cory S. Brummett and ending with David J. White, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Julie M. Aliferi and ending with Brett A. Wise, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Matthew E. Adkisson III and ending with Tracie L. Taranto, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Peter A. Arrobio and ending with Kevin J. Watkins, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with John A. Anderson and ending with Jay A. Young, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Lawrence H. Kennedy and ending with Jackie A. Severson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Jose G. Hernandez and ending with Derek A. Vestal, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with David A. Abernathy and ending with Jesse J. Zimbauer, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Kenneth M. King, to be Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with Garry P. Closas, to be Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with Paul D. Meltzer and ending with Alexander Woldemariam, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with William J. Bailey, Jr. and ending with Christopher D. Tucker, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.
Navy nominations beginning with David J. Allen and ending with Tracie M. Zielinski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with David M. Buzetti and ending with Eric R. Vetter, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with David E. Bailey and ending with Christopher J. Steward, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with John R. Adamson and ending with Mary C. Wise, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Sean A. Cox and ending with Luis A. Perez, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Elizabeth W. Bundt and ending with Michael G. Watson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nomination of Miguel A. Santiesteban to be Commander, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Mark W. Adams and ending with Mary C. Wise, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

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

By Mr. ROUNDS:
S. 34. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize officers to opt out of promotion board consideration for promotion; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. ROUNDS:
S. 1382. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to temporarily suspend officer grade tables to attract more talent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. NELSON):
S. 381. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify safe harbor requirements to automatic contribution arrangements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Warren, and Mr. Rubio):
S. 1381. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to authorize borrowers to separately consolidate loan obligations; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mrs. Feinstein):
S. 1382. A bill to provide for a general capital increase for the North American Development Bank, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. McCaskill (for herself, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Booker, Mr. Brown, Ms. Cortez Masto, Ms. Duckworth, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Franken, Mrs. Gillibrand, Ms. Harris, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Leahy, Mr. Markey, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Reed, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Van Hollen, Mr. Whitehouse, and Mr. Wyden):
S. 1386. A bill to permit employees to request changes to their work schedules without fear of retaliation and to ensure that employers consider these requests, and to require employers to provide more predictable and stable schedules for employees in certain occupations with evidence of unpredictable and unstable scheduling practices that negatively affect employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. Blumenthal, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Coons, Mr. Markley, Mr. Wyden, Mr. Van Hollen, Mr. Booker, Mr. Franken, Mrs. Shaheen, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Kaine, Mr. Vazquez, and Mr. Brown):
S. Res. 185. A resolution recognizing June 20, 2017, as "World Refugee Day"; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 21. At the request of Mr. Paul, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. Strange) was added as a cosponsor of S. 21, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S. 34. At the request of Mr. Johnson, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. Strange) was added as a cosponsor of S. 34, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for the en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for "midnight rules", and for other purposes.

S. 58. At the request of Mr. Heller, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. Portman) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. Shaheen) were added as cosponsors of S. 58, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 75. At the request of Mrs. McCaskill, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. Nelson) was added as a cosponsor of S. 75, a bill to provide for the reconsideration of claims for disability compensation for veterans who were the subjects of experiments by the Department of Defense during World War II that were conducted to assess the effects of mustard gas or lewisite on people, and for other purposes.

S. 197. At the request of Mr. Moran, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. Donnelly) was added as a cosponsor of S. 167, a bill to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas.

S. 170. At the request of Mr. Manchin, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. Tester) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to provide for non-preemption of measures by 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. 374. At the request of Mr. Blunt, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. Capito) was added as a co-sponsor of S. 374, a bill to enable concrete masonry products manufacturers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for concrete masonry products.

S. 434. At the request of Mr. Franken, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. King) was added as a cosponsor of S. 434, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to qualify homeless youth and veterans who are full-time students for purposes of the low income housing tax credit.

S. 534. At the request of Mrs. Feinstein, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. Bennett) was added as a cosponsor of S. 534, a bill to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes.

S. 569. At the request of Ms. Cantwell, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. Menendez) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide for the en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for midnight rules, and for other purposes.

S. 708. At the request of Mr. Markey, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Ms. McCaskill) was added as a cosponsor of S. 708, a bill to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 913. At the request of Mr. King, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. Warren) was added as a cosponsor of S. 913, a bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to establish an initiative, carried out by the Assistant Secretary for Aging, to coordinate Federal efforts and programs for home
modifications enabling older individuals to live independently and safely in a home environment, and for other purposes.

S. 929
At the request of Mrs. Shaheen, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. Brown) was added as a cosponsor of S. 929, a bill to improve the HUBZone program.

S. 1098
At the request of Mr. Gardner, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. Wyden) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1098, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to exclude cannabidiol and cannabidiol-rich plants from the definition of marijuana, and for other purposes.

S. 1224
At the request of Mr. Isakson, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. Crapo) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1024, a bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1237
At the request of Mr. Grassley, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. Tillis) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1237, a bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to clarify the rule allowing debt discharge as a nonpriority claim of governmental claims arising from the disposition of farm assets under chapter 12 bankruptcies.

S. 1320
At the request of Mr. Inhofe, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. Wicker), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. Hassan), the Senator from Maine (Mr. King), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. Moran) were added as cosponsors of S. 1320, a bill to reform apportionments to general aviation airports under the airport improvement program, to improve project delivery at certain airports, and to designate certain airports as disaster relief airports, and for other purposes.

S. 1343
At the request of Mr. Thune, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. Donnelly) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1343, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to extend and modify certain charitable tax provisions.

S. 1349
At the request of Mrs. Ernst, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. Rubio) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1349, a bill to provide that the rate of military basic pay for the Senior Enlisted Advisors to the commanders of the combatant commands shall be equivalent to the rate of military basic pay for the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and for other purposes.

S. 1354
At the request of Mr. Carper, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. Klobuchar) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1354, a bill to establish an Individual Market Reinsurance fund to provide funding for State individual market stabilization reinsurance programs.

At the request of Mr. Daines, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. Toomey) was added as a cosponsor of S. J. Res. 46, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

S. Res. 154
At the request of Mr. Johnson, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Ms. Murkowski) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 154, a resolution promoting awareness of motorcycle profiling and encouraging collaboration and communication with the motorcycle community and law enforcement officials to prevent instances of profiling.

S. Res. 194
At the request of Mr. Blumenthal, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Ms. Schakosky) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 194, a resolution designating June 15, 2017, as "World Elder Abuse Awareness Day".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS
By Ms. Collins (for herself and Mr. Nelson):
S. 1383. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify safe harbor requirements applicable to automatic contribution arrangements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. Collins. Mr. President, ensuring that more Americans are better prepared financially for their retirement is one of my top priorities. That is why I rise to reintroduce with my colleague, Senator Nelson, the Retirement Security Act of 2017. Our bill would encourage more small employers to offer retirement plans, provide incentives for employees to save more for retirement, and make it easier for low- and middle-income taxpayers to claim tax benefits for retirement savings already authorized in law.

According to the non-partisan Center for Retirement Research, there is an estimated $7.7 trillion gap between the savings American households need to maintain their standard of living in retirement and what they actually have. A recent Gallup poll found that only 54 percent of working Americans believe that they will have enough money to live comfortably in retirement. We must continue to work to ensure that more Americans will have the resources they need to enjoy their "golden years."

The Social Security Administration’s most recent report noted that 61 percent of all beneficiaries rely on Social Security for more than half of their income. Many seniors in my State rely almost entirely on Social Security to cover their monthly expenses, despite the fact that the average annual benefit is only about $16,000 per year. It is hard to imagine stretching those dollars far enough to pay the bills—certain a "comfortable retirement" is out of the question.

Sadly, they fare no better when it comes to savings: a survey by the Federal Reserve found that nearly half of individuals do not have enough savings to cover an emergency expense of $400. That is not even enough to buy new tires for a car. For this reason, among others, Americans need to increase their personal savings so that we can better weather financial emergencies without raiding our retirement accounts.

There are many reasons why Americans have struggled to save for retirement, including the shift away from employer-based "defined benefit" plans or pensions; the severity of the recent financial crisis; rising health care costs; the need for expensive long-term care; and most of all, the fact that Americans are living far longer than they did in the past. Many Americans reaching retirement age also have more debt than retirement of previous generations.

Another contributing factor is that employees of small businesses are much less likely to participate in employer-based retirement plans. According to a study by the PEW Charitable Trusts, more than 30 million U.S. workers lack access to a work-based plan to save for retirement.

Making it easier for smaller businesses to offer retirement plans for their workers would make a significant difference in the financial security of many Americans. That is why the bill we are introducing today focuses on reducing the cost and complexity of retirement plans, especially for small businesses, and on encouraging individuals to save more for retirement. Let me describe the provisions of the bill:

First, our bill would make it easier for businesses to enter into multiple employer plans, known as MEPs, to offer retirement programs to their employees. MEPs permit small companies to share the administrative burden of a retirement plan, which helps lower costs. Current law discourages the use of MEPs because it is a "connection," or "nexus," between unrelated businesses in order to join a MEP, such as membership in the same trade association. Our bill would waive the nexus requirement for businesses.

Second, our bill makes joining a MEP a more attractive option for small businesses. Under current law, if one employer in a MEP fails to meet the minimum criteria necessary for retirement plans to obtain tax benefits, all employers and their employees could lose the tax benefits which are substantial. For employees, benefits include delaying the taxation of income contributed to a plan until funds are
withdrawn. For employers, plan disqualification could result in limited deductions and a higher tax burden. Our bill would address this uncertainty, and protect members of a MEP from the failure of one bad apple to meet its obligations.

Third, our bill would reduce the cost of maintaining a retirement plan. Current law requires that participants in a retirement plan receive a variety of notices. Our bill would direct Treasury to simplify, clarify, and consolidate these required notices to lessen costs.

Fourth, the Retirement Security Act would encourage those still in the workforce to save more for retirement. Retirement plans are often designed to comply with existing safe havens to prevent the IRS from challenging the tax benefits that flow to employees and employers. The existing safe harbor for so-called “automatic enrollment” plans effectively caps employee contributions at ten percent of annual pay, while a participant contributing a “matching” amount of up to six percent. Our bill would create an additional safe harbor for these plans that would allow employees to receive an employer match on contributions of up to ten percent of pay. Employers would be able to contribute more than ten percent, albeit without an employer match for contributions above ten percent.

I recognize that businesses that choose to adopt a plan with this new optional safe harbor may face additional costs due to the increased employer match. That is why our bill would also help the smallest businesses—those with fewer than 100 employees—offset this cost by providing a new tax credit equal to the increased match.

I should note that the new retirement plan options for businesses included in our bill are just that—options. Large or small, businesses would be required to offer its employees a retirement plan under the Retirement Security Act.

Finally, our bill would ensure that current measures to encourage savings are functioning as they were intended. One such measure is the so-called “saver’s credit,” which reduces the tax burden on low- and middle-income individuals who contribute to retirement plans, including IRAs and 401(k) plans. Yet there is no means to determine if Form 1040EZ, which is frequently used by these individuals. A 2013 Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies survey found that only 23 percent of people with household incomes of less than $50,000 per year, the group most likely to qualify, were aware of the saver’s credit. To address this, our bill directs Treasury to make the credit available on Form 1040 EZ.

Mr. President, during my time as chairman of the Senate Aging Committee, I have heard countless stories of retirees whose savings did not go as far as they anticipated. Adequate savings reduce poverty among our seniors. As the HELP Committee noted in a July 2012 report, poverty among our seniors also increases Medicare and Medicaid costs and strains our social safety net. Giving those not yet at retirement age more opportunities to save and to save more would help ease this additional burden on entitlement programs that already are projected to be unsustainable.

In light of the positive effects this bill would have in strengthening retirement security for all Americans, I urge my colleagues to join Senator Nelson and me in supporting the Retirement Security Act of 2017.

Thank you, Mr. President.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):
S. 1385. A bill to provide for a general capital increase for the North American Development Bank, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1385

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 “North American Development Bank Improvement Act of 2017.”

SEC. 2. GENERAL CAPITAL INCREASE.

Part 2 of subtitle D of title V of Public Law 103–182 (22 U.S.C. 290m et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 547. FIRST CAPITAL INCREASE.

(a) SUBSCRIPTION AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to subscribe on behalf of the United States to, and make payment for, 150,000 additional shares of the capital stock of the Bank.

(b) LIMITATIONS.—Any subscription by the United States to the capital stock of the Bank shall be effective only to such extent and in such amounts as are provided in advance in appropriations Acts.”.

SEC. 3. POLICY GOALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to projects within the mission and scope of the North American Development Bank on the date before the date of the enactment of this Act and pursuant to section 2 of article II of the Charter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall direct the representatives of the United States to the Board of Directors of the Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to support the financing of projects related to:

(1) environmental infrastructure relating to water pollution, wastewater treatment, water conservation, municipal solid waste, and related matters;

(2) natural gas, including natural gas pipelines and combined cycle power plants, with major emphasis on cross-border energy distribution and consumption and the energy security of the United States and Mexico; and

(3) the expansion or new construction of international cross-border border crossings to help facilitate the flow of goods and people across the international land border between the United States and Mexico while reducing wait times at border crossings and improving air quality by reducing pollution related to vehicular and commercial traffic.

(b) CHARTER DEFINED.—In this section, the term “Charter” means the Agreement Concerning the Establishment of a Border Environment Cooperation Commission and a North American Development Bank, as designated at Washington and Mexico November 16 and 18, 1993, and entered into force January 1, 1994 (TIAS 12516), between the United States and Mexico.

SEC. 4. EFFICIENCIES AND STREAMLINING.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall direct the representatives of the United States to the Board of Directors of the North American Development Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to seek to require the Bank to develop and implement efficiencies and streamlines to accelerate the project certification and financing process, including through initiatives such as single certifications for revolving facilities and similar groups of small projects, expansion of internal authority to approve qualified projects below certain monetary thresholds, and expedited certification for public sector projects subject to lender bidding processes.

SEC. 5. PERFORMANCE MEASURES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall direct the representatives of the United States to the Board of Directors of the North American Development Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to seek to require the Bank to develop performance measures that—

(1) demonstrate how projects and financing approved by the Bank are meeting the Bank’s mission and providing added value to the region near the international land border between the United States and Mexico; and

(2) are reviewed and updated not less frequently than annually.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall submit to Congress, with the submission to Congress of the budget of the President for a fiscal year under section 1105(a) of title 5, United States Code, a report on progress in imposing the performance measures described in subsection (a).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 195—RECOGNIZING JUNE 20, 2017, AS “WORLD REFUGEE DAY”

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. COONS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. KAIN, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. BROWN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a resolution to mark World Refugee Day, and to address the ongoing displacement crisis across the globe. War, conflict and persecution have forced millions of people to leave their homes, creating more than 20 million refugees and internally displaced people than at any other time in history. Today, there are more than 65 million displaced men, women, and children worldwide, the highest level ever recorded in history.

To put this number into perspective—if the global displaced population were a country, it would be the 21st largest country, more populated than the United Kingdom.
The global displacement trends we are witnessing now, due to conflict, severe human rights abuses, and climate change, are not going away. U.S. leadership in responding to these crises, whether it is the immense suffering of refugees from Syria or elsewhere, or the plight of the internally displaced in Syria and Iraq, is critical. How we respond—or whether we respond at all—will undoubtedly shape the landscape and the lives of future generations for years to come.

The United States has a long and proud history of providing safe harbor to the world's most vulnerable refugees—women and children, survivors of torture and other violence, and those with severe medical conditions. This included after World War II and after the fall of Saigon, when we resettled hundreds of thousands of refugees.

At the same time, we take the security of our citizens seriously. That is the reason the United States has the most comprehensive screening process in the world, involving the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and National Counter Terrorism Center. The process includes biometric checks, medical screenings, forensic testing of documents, DNA testing for family reunification cases, and in-person interviews with highly trained homeland security officials. The U.S. Refugee Resettlement program has been and should remain open to those of all nationalities and religions who face persecution. The Trump Administration's proposals that would have the U.S. State Department disqualify refugees from protection based on their nationality or religion fly in the face of the very principles this Nation was built upon. They also contradict the legacy of leadership our country has historically demonstrated, and cherished human dignity and rights.

It is clear, however, that the Trump Administration is determined to undermine longstanding American tradition and values, and in doing so they weaken our National security. As we all know, one of President Trump's first executive orders sought to drastically reduce the number of refugees entering the United States and turn away refugees from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. This un-American policy, based on fear not fact, cannot be tolerated. We collectively must reject the misplaced notion that some refugees are more deserving of protection than others.

Again and again, the Federal courts are signaling to the White House a real need for the President to immediately rescind his discriminatory executive order targeting Muslim refugees and travelers. Even while stayed by the courts, President Trump's executive orders have made America less safe, damaged relationships with our allies, and harmed countless numbers of law-abiding citizens, travelers, and their families. America is a compassionate nation steeped with a history of welcoming immigrants and refugees.

I was proud to join Members of Congress who filed legal briefs in opposition to the President's discriminatory executive orders, along with HIAS in Silver Spring, Maryland. The Court's decision is to "welcome the stranger" and "protect the refugee." Recently the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit provided a valuable check and balance on the President's authority. The court correctly pointed out that the President's most recent Executive Order "speaks with vague words of national security, but in context drips with religious intolerance, animus, and discrimination" which violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. No American president is above the law.

Turning away refugees—whether they are from Syria or Iran, or Iraq, whether they are Muslims or Christians, Hindus or Jews—means turning our backs on the international humanitarian system and the mechanisms of stability and security that are the bedrock of nations in order. Refugees remain powerful ambassadors of the American Dream and our Nation's founding principles of equal opportunity, religious freedom, and liberty and justice for all.

The Trump Administration again revealed its determination to erode American leadership with the release of its Fiscal Year 2018 Budget request. Their FY18 budget represents a wholesale rejection of American leadership on virtually every critical matter, including humanitarian assistance and protection of the most vulnerable populations. The President's budget called for a 44 percent cut in humanitarian assistance—truly horrifying reduction made even more appalling given the level of global need. According to a group of leading NGOs, the human cost of these cuts could be staggering. The Trump Administration's proposals to the Migration and Refugee Assistance account could result in over 3.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons not receiving assistance globally, including about 1 million in the Middle East and 1.1 million in Africa.

The United States has been a beacon of hope for so many around the world for centuries, and it is imperative that we remain so for others in this century, and beyond. We need to be unified on this and the United States must lead by example. It is a universal human desire to live in peace and security and to create a better life for our families and loved ones. We must do our part to facilitate that. We need to keep our doors—and our hearts—open to those who so desperately need safe harbor.

Whereas World Refugee Day is an opportunity to acknowledge the courage, strength, and determination of women, men, and children forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, and persecution;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (referred to in this Resolution as "UNHCR")—

(1) there are more than 65,600 displaced people worldwide, the highest level ever recorded, including nearly 22,500,000 refugees, more than 46,300,000 internally displaced people, and 2,800,000 people homeless;

(2) children account for 51 percent of the global refugee population, millions of whom are unable to access basic services, including education;

(3) 10,300,000 people were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution in 2016;

(4) more than 5,000,000 refugees have fled Syria since the start of the conflict, and more than 6,300,000 people are displaced inside Syria;

(5) since January 2014, more than 3,000,000 Iraqis fleeing violence have been internally displaced, and 257,000 refugees have fled to neighboring countries;

(6) South Sudan has the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis, which is now the largest refugee crisis in Africa, with more than 1,800,000 refugees, including 1,000,000 children;

(7) increasing violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras led to a growing number of unaccompanied child refugees, who are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, human trafficking, and kidnapping;

(8) ongoing conflict, violence, and persecution have resulted in the displacement of millions of people in Afghanistan, Colombia, and the Central African Republic;

Whereas 84 percent of the world's refugees are hosted in developing regions, with more than 50 percent hosted in the world's least developed countries;

Whereas refugees who are women and children are often at greater risk of violence, human trafficking, exploitation, and gender-based violence;

Whereas the United States resettlement program is a life-saving solution critical to global humanitarian efforts, which reflects American values, strengthens global security, and alleviates the burden placed on first-line host countries;

Whereas refugees are the most vetted travelers to enter the United States and are subject to extensive screening checks, including biometric data checks, and multiple interagency checks;

Whereas refugees contribute to their communities by starting businesses, paying taxes, and sharing their cultural traditions;

Whereas refugees contribute more than their taxes in state-funded services, including schooling and health care;

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the bipartisan commitment of the United States to promote the safety, health, and well-being of the millions of refugees;

(2) recognizes those individuals who have risked their lives working individually and for nongovernmental organizations and international agencies, such as UNHCR, to provide life-saving assistance and protection for people displaced by conflict around the world;

(3) underscores the importance of the United States Refugee Resettlement Program as a critical tool for United States global leadership;

(4) calls upon the United States Government—

(A) to continue providing robust funding for refugee protection overseas and resettlement in the United States;

(B) to uphold its international leadership role in responding to displacement crises with humanitarian assistance and protection of the most vulnerable populations; and

(C) to alleviate the suffering of people from host countries through humanitarian and development support while maintaining the
United States’ long-standing tradition of resettling the most vulnerable refugees regardless of their country of origin or religious beliefs; (5) reaffirms the goals of World Refugee Day; and (6) reiterates the strong commitment of the United States to seek to protect the millions of refugees who live without material, social, or legal protections.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO OBJECT TO PROCEEDING
I, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Steven Andrew Engel, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Attorney General for the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel, dated June 20, 2017.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017
Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21, further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired. The Journal of proceedings be approved to be dated, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Mandelker nomination post cloture. Further, that following the prayer adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21; further, that following the prayer adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21; further, that following the prayer adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21. Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21; further, that following the prayer adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21, further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired. The Journal of proceedings be approved to be dated, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Mandelker nomination post cloture. Further, that following the prayer adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21; further, that following the prayer adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued
ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT
Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator WICKER and Senator HASSAN.

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

The Senator from Mississippi.
BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A LARGER NAVY
Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, let’s talk about the size of our Navy’s fleet. The current fleet has 276 ships, but the Navy’s requirement is now for 355 ships—a figure supported by congressionally mandated future fleet architecture studies.

Langham spoke on the floor about the national imperative to build a larger Navy. I outlined the critical missions that our Navy performs every day to help secure the country’s vital interests. I also described an intense naval competition with our real and potential adversaries and the need for a robust U.S. Navy to meet that competition.

America needs a bigger Navy. How do we get there? Related to that question is when we get to a 355-ship fleet. According to the Chief of Naval Operations, ADM John Richardson, we should reach our 355-ship objective in the mid-2020s. To do that, we should have started yesterday. Building and sustaining technologically advanced ships is a monumental project. It cannot happen overnight. It takes years.

As chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee, I intend to lay a firm foundation this year to help support a mid-term blueprint for the Chairman’s work. I am convinced that Congress has a critical role to play in determining how we get to 355. All options should be on the table. Here are four ideas to consider.

No. 1, ramp up production lines. The Navy’s accelerated fleet plan states that over the next 7 years, the shipbuilding industrial base can support building more ships than are currently planned. The Navy plans to build 59 ships in fiscal year 2017, but the industry can actually complete 86. We should do this. Many hot production lines have excess capacity. Congress should authorize the Navy to “buy in bulk,” using multiyear and block buy contracts. These contracts would help solidify the skilled workforce, stimulate suppliers, and drive down costs. We can also authorize advance procurement funding to buy long-lead-time pieces and parts. No. 2, extend the service life of ships in the fleet.

A quarter century ago, the Navy had 450 ships and deployments that averaged 167 days. Now, the average deployment exceeds 200 days. In other words, the Navy is smaller, but the tempo of its operations has accelerated. An extra month of deployment puts additional wear and tear on ships, and this can force early retirement and ultimately squander taxpayer dollars. Better maintenance can extend ships’ service lives, delay retirement, and help us reach the 355-ship goal faster. I applaud the President’s budget request for fully funding ship depot maintenance. We must build new ships and maintain the current fleet better.

In a recent speech to the Naval War College, the CNO, Admiral Richardson, noted that extending the lives of Arleigh Burke-class destroyers could help the Navy reach the 355-ship objective. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the President’s budget request for fully funding ship depot maintenance be agreed to, and the CNO’s agreement with the CNO in a recent speech in which he stated that proper maintenance would extend service lives and help grow the fleet more rapidly. No. 3, reactivate ships in the Ready Reserve fleet.

During the Reagan buildup, the Navy brought ships out of mothballs, including battleships with massive guns, to help grow the fleet size. The Navy should look at the Reserve fleet ship by ship to determine if any can be restored to operational status.

In his Naval War College speech, the CNO revealed that he is considering bringing some retired Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigates out of mothballs. Vice Admiral Moore also suggested examining the merits of returning some logistics ships to the force. Reactivating retired ships does not simply mean bringing back less capable ships. Jerry Hendrix and Robert C. O’Brien wrote in POLITICO in April that reactivated ships could be outfitted with modern missile systems and potentially cutting-edge electromagnetic railgun and directed energy weapons. In other words, reactivated ships could perform completely different and relevant missions at a fraction of the cost of new construction.

No. 4, develop and deploy unmanned maritime systems. The fleet of the future will include new types of ships. Again, according to the CNO, “There is no question that unmanned systems must also be an integral part of the new fleet.” Unmanned undersea and surface ships can offer significant advantages, such as the ability to conduct persistent operations. We have seen drones revolutionize combat from the skies. The same is possible on the seas.

I believe the Navy needs a dedicated range to test unmanned systems with other manned and unmanned platforms, while also training new operators and maintainers. I applaud the Navy for including substantial R&D funding for unmanned underwater vehicles, UUVs, in its unfunded priorities list. I am hopeful that Congress will provide the resources that are necessary to rapidly develop and deploy new unmanned systems.

To conclude, I would be considering all options for building up our naval capacity. I do not dismiss the fact that these options cost money and some may be controversial, but they are necessary to rapidly respond to challenges and fulfill its missions. The Navy means 355 ships forward to working with my colleagues to set this imperative national project into motion.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.
Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Mississippi for his remarks about the men and women in the Navy and their need for support.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION
Mr. President, I rise today to join my Democratic colleagues in speaking out against the dangerous TrumpCare bill that is currently being drafted behind closed doors by our Republican colleagues.

The secrecy around this bill shows that Senate Republicans know they cannot defend it to their constituents. That is why Senate Republicans are refusing to even hold a single hearing on the bill. In my State of New Hampshire, you can’t pass a bill if it has not
had a hearing, and the Senate here in Washington should work the same way. I continue to urge my colleagues to hold public hearings on this bill so that we can examine the bill for ourselves and get feedback from our constituents and stakeholders.

We do know that this legislation will be very similar to the House TrumpCare bill, which President Trump himself called mean, and calling it mean is even putting it lightly. TrumpCare threatens to have devastating impacts on millions of Americans. Today I am going to address three specific ways that TrumpCare is mean to people in New Hampshire and across the Nation. First, it undermines the Medicaid Program; second, it hurts our seniors; and third, it continues this administration’s efforts to roll back women’s access to healthcare.

As Governor, I worked to pass and then reauthorize New Hampshire’s bipartisan Medicaid expansion plan that provides coverage now to over 50,000 hard-working Granite Staters. And TrumpCare, by proposing to repeal Medicaid expansion, hurts many of the hard-working people who are served now by that expansion program and whose care depends on the expansion program being continued. This includes people like Jo from Portsmouth.

I met Jo at a roundtable earlier this year. Jo has a painful, precancerous disease that eats at her abdominal organs. She has had it for most of her life. Prior to the Great Recession, she had a job that provided health insurance and allowed her to get treatment for this chronic health condition. But in 2009 Jo was laid off from her job. Then unable to find reliable, full-time work, she worked several part-time jobs, but they didn’t offer health insurance.

In 2012, she desperately needed surgery. She didn’t have health insurance. She had a job, but her health declined, the recession continued, and her ability to support herself also declined.

In 2014, after New Hampshire came together and passed its bipartisan Medicaid expansion program, she was able to get healthcare coverage. The Medicaid expansion program helps her get 8 to 12 prescriptions, necessary medical tests, physical therapy, treatment, and specialists. This has also meant that Jo is healthy enough to work again. TrumpCare would end Medicaid expansion, putting people like Jo at risk.

TrumpCare also changes Medicaid into a per-capita cap system. That is a fancy label for massive cuts to the Medicaid Program that would force States to choose between slashing benefits, reducing the number of people who can get care, or both. Under TrumpCare, States will be faced with cutting services that children, people with disabilities, and seniors depend on.

This brings me to the second point I would like to highlight today about this mean bill and whom it impacts. It is clear that TrumpCare would hurt seniors across the Granite State. The majority of nursing home residents in New Hampshire are served by Medicaid. TrumpCare would jeopardize the ability of seniors to stay in nursing homes. It would also threaten services for seniors who receive at-home care. And these cuts to Medicaid are just one of the ways seniors would be hurt under this mean proposal, because TrumpCare would also create an age tax, letting insurance plans charge older adults five times more than younger people. If you are between the ages of 50 and 64, you will be especially hard hit.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, under TrumpCare, you could face 20 percent higher premiums in 2018, with especially high premium hikes for older Americans. And the AARP opposes TrumpCare because it would “make healthcare less secure and less affordable.”

Finally, my third point is that it is clear that TrumpCare would continue this administration’s efforts to roll back women’s access to critical healthcare services. To compete economically on a level playing field, women must be able to make their own decisions about if and when to start a family. They should not have to pay more than men for healthcare, and they should be able to visit providers of their own choice who understand their healthcare needs. To fully participate not only in our economy, but also in our democracy, women must be recognized for their capacity to make their own healthcare decisions, just as men are.

Under TrumpCare, if you are a mother, giving birth could now be considered a preexisting condition. TrumpCare would also undermine the requirement that insurance companies have to cover essential health benefits, including maternity care. And TrumpCare’s Medicaid cuts would have drastic impacts for women across the country. According to the Congressional Budget Office, Medicaid pays for nearly half of all births in the United States, and it provides healthcare coverage for one in three children across our country.

TrumpCare also defunds Planned Parenthood, which provides critical primary and preventive healthcare services to thousands of New Hampshire women, including preventive care, birth control, and cancer screenings.

My Democratic colleagues and I are ready to work with anyone who is serious about working to build on the Affordable Care Act and lower healthcare costs for hard-working people, but what we do not need is legislation that even the President himself admits is mean.

I will continue working with my colleagues to speak out against and defeat TrumpCare, and I urge the people of New Hampshire and people all across America to keep making their voices heard and make clear that this mean bill is simply unacceptable.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 12 noon tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:39 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, June 21, 2017, at 12 noon.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ANNA MARIA FARIAS, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE GUSTAVO VELASQUEZ AGUILAR, RESIGNED.

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

MARVIN KAPLAN, OF KANSAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD FOR THE TERM OF FIVE YEARS EXPIRING AUGUST 27, 2020, VICE HARRY IVY JOHNSON III, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

PATRICK FIEZZELLA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DIPUTY SECRETARY OF LABOR, VICE CHRISTOPHER P. LU, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANCE ALLEN ROBERTSON, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AGING, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE KATHY J. GREENLER.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate June 20, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

SHOCK LONG, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.
CONGRATULATING COLLEEN MURRAY ON RECEIVING THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD GOLD MEDAL

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Miami Springs resident Colleen Murray for her dedication to bettering our community and receiving Congress’s highest honor, the Congressional Award Gold Medal.

To receive the Congressional Award Gold Medal, one must demonstrate immense dedication and be willing to sacrifice a great amount of time. All recipients must participate in 400 hours of voluntary community service, 200 hours of personal development, 200 hours of physical activities, and an additional four night mission of their choosing. This is all done within a two year time frame.

For Colleen’s public service, she chose to highlight her appreciation for classical music and opera. Colleen volunteered at local hospitals and provided music therapy to patients. By utilizing her passion, Colleen not only improved her musical skills but also helped others in our community. Colleen incorporated her love of music for her personal development requirement as well. She dedicated time to improve her harp skills in order to compete in regional and national competitions. Most notably, she performed with the New World Symphony. For her physical fitness requirement, Colleen built up her stamina and ran one mile at a consistent pace despite a persistent knee injury.

As Colleen was nearing her goal, she had to complete her four days of exploration. With an interest in history, she visited a variety of sites in Tennessee, South Carolina and Georgia, ranging from the Revolutionary War to the Civil Rights era. During the evening, Colleen stayed with local families to fully immerse herself in the area. With all of the activities Colleen completed, she not only bettered the community, but herself.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Colleen Murray on her accomplishment, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing her outstanding achievement. It is an honor to know that Florida’s 25th District has an individual with such a bright future.

BERNADETTE CHAMBERS
HON. ED PERLMUTTER
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Bernadette Chambers for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Bernadette Chambers is a student at Manual Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities. The dedication demonstrated by Bernadette Chambers is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Bernadette Chambers for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY’S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DOUG LAMBORN
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Focus on the Family, a vital American institution dedicated to preserving one of our country’s most foundational pillars—the family.

Forty years ago, there were dire warning signs of the erosion of the family and the Judeo-Christian roots that have brought such benefit and blessing to the United States of America, and to the entire world. Dr. James Dobson saw these threats and could not ignore them.

In Psalm 11:3, King David asks, “When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?” That question has been viewed by some as a lament—a rhetorical question that signals defeat or resignation. But others take it as a rallying cry—to weigh that question, to search one’s heart, and to resolve to do something about the foundations that are being destroyed.

It was in this spirit that Dr. James Dobson founded Focus on the Family. Instead of treating or shrugging off the problem to the next generation, the Family has proven what the righteous can truly do. Under the vision and leadership of Dr. Dobson and more recently Jim Daly, by the grace of God, incredible things have been accomplished to preserve, promote, and protect the family.

It would be impossible to quantify the full impact that Focus on the Family has had in our own nation as well as across the world. We do know that thousands of marriages have been revived, prodigal sons and daughters have been brought home, life changes have been successfully navigated, young adults have been equipped, children have been lovingly discipled, and families have been encouraged and strengthened.

I do want to highlight a significant impact that can be quantified. Through Focus on the Family’s Option Ultrasound, over 720 grants have been awarded to pregnancy centers to purchase ultrasound machines. As a direct result, over 382,000 lives have been saved by mothers choosing life over abortion.

In Colorado Springs, our local pregnancy centers have benefited greatly from the generosity of Focus on the Family. Many of the materials given to women facing unexpected pregnancies come from Focus. In fact, since Life Network obtained its very first ultrasound machine through Focus on the Family, over 2000 women who have seen their babies on ultrasounds have chosen life. What an incalculable, multi-generational blessing.

Though Focus on the Family was founded in California, we are glad that they saw the light and relocated to Colorado Springs when they did in 1991. I wonder for how many children around the country—even the world—their first knowledge of Colorado Springs is through Adventures in Odyssey.

It is truly a privilege to celebrate with Focus on the Family on the occasion of their 40th anniversary. Focus on the Family has fortified our families and our country, and for that, I am truly grateful.

PASSING OF WALKER A. WILLIAMS

HON. KAREN BASS
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor the life and memory of Walker Alexander Williams.

Born in East Orange, New Jersey in 1940, Walker lifted his eyes well beyond our shores and developed an international reputation as a businessman and an advocate for the African and Caribbean diaspora communities. His passion for economic empowerment led him to create Alternative Marketing Access, Leadership Global (formerly Leadership Africa USA) and NiQuan Energy as platforms for development. Walker leaves behind a legacy of uplifting others and promoting the advancement of under-represented groups, especially those of African and African American descent.

Walker also recognized the importance of training people to fill leadership roles and developing talent to serve in African political and economic contexts. He had a vision for developing countries in which their diverse communities and nations overall could reach their full potential. His distinguished career included testifying in Congress on “The Future of Energy in Africa” where he urged this body to support and encourage partnerships to improve Africa’s access to energy. He also provided vital leadership around the initial passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), arranging several Congressional briefings for African Ambassadors, key members of Congress, and Administration officials on AGOA and its potential effect on infrastructure, energy, agriculture, health, nutrition, and security.

During his long career as a businessman, advocate, and philanthropist, Walker remained
committed to mentoring and empowering young people and professionals, and he always aimed to make those who worked with him feel valued. He worked with more than 100 non-governmental organizations over thirty-plus years, and he facilitated scholarship and education for futures in Africa and the Caribbean through the Education Africa Presidential and Premier Education Awards, Nelson Mandela Presidential Medallions, and the Walter Sisulu Scholarship and Training Fund. He encouraged Africans and Americans alike to envision and achieve personal power and a more prosperous future. Walker believed that a better Africa and Caribbean meant a better United States of America.

Walker is remembered by his partner, children, and grandchildren as a humble and dedicated man. I would like to celebrate a life of service while I offer condolences to those he has left behind.

RECOGNIZING JANINE KIERAN

HON. DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Principal Janine Kieran for her lifelong passion for education.

Born and raised in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, Janine always knew that she wanted to be an educator. After graduating from high school and college, she met the love of her life, Brian, to whom she has been married for over 28 years. At the same time, she started her 33-year-long career in education as a Special Education teacher at Brooklyn’s George Westinghouse High School, where she has worked ever since. She then went on to serve as a Guidance Counselor, Assistant Principal, and Principal. It is obvious that her students over the years loved having her as a teacher and principal, especially because she made learning fun and exciting. After all, it is hard to imagine a teacher who used to sing and play guitar boring her students.

I cannot say enough about Janine’s compassion. Throughout her many years at George Westinghouse High School, she always had an open door if her students ever needed help with their schoolwork or just wanted advice. Her selflessness truly showed in her work. Putting aside the fact that she had a husband and two children at home, Janine was always able to devote equal energy to students and fellow staff members.

Furthermore, her kindness and altruism certainly goes without saying. Nevertheless, I am certain that even though she is retiring, she will always treasure her many years as an educator.

Mr. Speaker, after 33 years of nonstop commitment to George Westinghouse High School, Janine Kiernan will soon start her well-deserved retirement. I am sure she will travel a lot more, which she always enjoys. Most importantly, however, she will get to spend more time with her husband and her two sons, Connor and Ryan. I thank her for her decades-long devotion to educating the next generation of leaders, and I wish her a very happy retirement.

CHLOE EAGAN

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chloe Eagan from North Fort Myers High School.

The National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists has selected Chloe as one of the delegates to attend the Congress of Future Medical Leaders at the University of Massachusetts Lowell later this month.

Chloe will be joining hundreds of other students from around the country in an honors-only program for high schoolers who wish to become physicians or go into the medical research field. I am proud that Chloe is representing our southwest Florida community.

She and her fellow delegates will be meeting with a distinguished group that includes Nobel Prize-winning laureates, top medical school deans, and leaders in medical research. The goal of the program is to honor, inspire, and direct top students like Chloe toward their desired goals in the medical field.

I commend Chloe for her outstanding performance in her studies which led to her selection to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders. I wish her continued success on her path to fulfilling her aspirations in the medical field.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF CHRISTOPHER BARADAT

HON. JARED HUFFMAN
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Staff Sergeant Christopher Baradat for heroic actions that were essential in rescuing 150 coalition soldiers in Afghanistan on April 6, 2013, and ultimately earned him the Air Force Cross, which was presented to him on April 20, 2017.

Raised in Marin County, Mr. Baradat graduated from San Marin High School in 2007, and enlisted in the United States Air Force shortly thereafter. He served his country for eight years, and is now studying welding and technical skills at Laney College in Oakland, where he lives with his wife Kellie and his three children.

On April 6, 2013, Staff Sgt. Baradat, a special tactics airman assigned to the 21st Special Tactics Squadron, was attached to a U.S. Army Special Forces Team in eastern Afghanistan. He was on his third deployment in Afghanistan. That day, his unit was called to support coalition soldiers who were surrounded and pinned down by Taliban fighters in a valley in the Kunar Province. Upon entering the valley his unit took direct fire from the ridge lines and other surrounding structures, forcing his team to take cover in a compound 400 meters away from coalition forces. Staff Sgt. Baradat’s responsibility was to communicate with supporting aircraft and provide pilots with targeting information to strike enemy positions.

Not being able to communicate with support aircraft through the compound walls, Staff Sgt. Baradat rushed out into the direct line of fire in order to communicate Taliban positions. Over the course of the next two hours, Staff Sgt. Baradat utilized 8 aircraft to drop 13 five hundred pound bombs and more than 1,100 rounds of ammunition on enemy positions surrounding his team and the coalition forces. The consistent barrage of fire created the conditions necessary for coalition forces and his team to withdraw from the valley. His heroism did not end there however, as he continued his communication with support aircraft throughout the exit out of the valley. Still putting himself in the direct line of fire, Staff Sgt. Baradat placed himself partially out of an armored carrier in order to maintain a secure communication signal with support aircraft. He would continue to do this until his entire team made it out of the valley.

Because his actions had a decisive impact on the outcome of that day, Staff Sgt. Baradat received the Air Force Cross, which is the second highest military award that a member of the United States Air Force can receive.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in expressing deep appreciation for Christopher Baradat’s extraordinary heroism that day and for the same and his family have made for this country.

HONORING MR. LARRY CASE FOR HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF INSURANCE AGENTS AFTER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER
OF MISSOURI
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, in 1987, Mr. Case began his employment as the Executive Vice President of the Missouri Association of Professional Insurance Agents. In a few years’ time, this organization and the Independent Agents of Missouri decided to form what is now known as the Missouri Association of Insurance Agents. In March 1992, he became the Vice President of Membership Services. On October 30, 1997, he was appointed as the Executive Director of Missouri Association of Insurance Agents. Mr. Case was then appointed to the position of Executive Vice President of the Missouri Association of Insurance Agents on September 1, 1999.

The Missouri Association of Insurance Agents is the oldest and largest association of insurance agents in the state, with a long standing tradition, approximately 500 independent agencies that are operated by 4,000 agents, brokers, and their employees are members of the association. In 2002, Mr. Case was awarded the Insurance Person of the Year Award for the significant contributions they have made to the insurance industry.

Mr. Case is passionate about the legislative and regulatory advocacy side of the insurance field and has played an integral part in passing legislation that has helped advance the causes of independent insurance agents in Missouri. He has served in various roles at the national level with the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America and the National Association of Professional Insurance
Cameron Chavez is a student at Arvada High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversity.

The dedication demonstrated by Cameron Chavez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them to the rest of their lives. I extend my deepest congratulations to Cameron Chavez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING FAIRVOTE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER OF COLORADO IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Cameron Chavez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Cameron Chavez is a student at Arvada High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversity.

The dedication demonstrated by Cameron Chavez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them to the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Cameron Chavez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING FAIRVOTE

HON. JAMIE RASKIN OF MARYLAND IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, since its founding in June 1992, FairVote has fought creatively all over America to advance significant voting and electoral reforms that make American democracy more responsive, more accountable, and more representative. I rise to celebrate this visionary non-partisan and non-profit organization which, I am proud to say, is headquartered in the 8th District of Maryland.

Under the exemplary leadership of its Executive Director Rob Richie and board chairs, former Congressman John B. Anderson and musician Krist Novoselic and with the energy of its youthful, talented staff, FairVote has worked with purpose and imagination to implement ranked-choice voting, proportional representation, redistricting reform, the National Popular Vote agreement and voter prerogation for teenagers nationwide.

FairVote's sophisticated educational campaigns have been teaching Americans across the country that these changes are all effective tools of democracy and can help us make certain that all Americans have their voices heard and views represented.

Mr. Richie's distinguished career in public life has been devoted to democratic ideals, voting rights, and the realization of responsive and representative government. He has played a key role in implementing ranked-choice voting in over a dozen cities; in advancing the National Popular Vote plan across the country; as state equal to 165 electoral votes have joined the agreement; and in promoting voter registration, voter access and voter participation.

On behalf of FairVote, Mr. Richie has appeared regularly in the media, written for leading national publications, produced nine books, and addressed important groups such as the American Political Science Association and National Conference of State Legislatures.

Through FairVote, Richie's luminous work has changed America's conception of how we vote, what democracy means and how we can make strong progress this century. Standing with him throughout as a colleague and inspirational reform leader in her own right has been his wife Cynthia Terrell.

As FairVote celebrates 25 years of thoughtful advocacy, I want to commend the group, its leaders and all affiliated with it for their hard work and passionate commitment not only to the principles of democratic inclusion and governance but to the difficult and urgently necessary process of electoral reform across the country. As a champion of electoral reform and the proud Representative from Maryland's 8th Congressional District, I look forward to watching the many important accomplishments still yet to come from Rob Richie and FairVote, American idealists and democratic patriots all.

HONORING THE LIFE OF NOE HERNANDEZ

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ OF TEXAS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Weslaco native, Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Noe Hernandez, one of the seven sailors lost in the tragic collision between the U.S.S. Fitzgerald and the ACX Crystal in the Philippine Sea on June 17, 2017.

Noe attended Weslaco High School where he participated in United States Army Junior Reserve Officer Training for four years. By the time he graduated in 2009, Noe had reached the rank of cadet major and served as the program's executive officer. Following graduation, he reported to the U.S. Navy Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois.

He was a student at the Recruit Training Command and the Center for Surface Combat Systems in Great Lakes until March 2010. He then served at the Navy Munitions Command in Sigonella, Italy, for three years and then reported to San Diego, California, for Littoral Combat Ship Training and classes at the Center for Surface Combat Systems until October 2015. Later that year, Noe and his family moved to Yokosuka, Japan, where he was stationed at Naval Forces Japan and subsequently on the U.S.S. Fitzgerald. During his time in the U.S.S. Navy, Noe became an Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist and earned the rank of Gunner's Mate 2nd Class.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my sincerest condolences to Dora, Leon, the Hernandez family, friends, and loved ones. Our country has lost one of the best South Texas has to offer and I hope his family can find peace in this trying time. I am proud to commemorate the life of Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Noe Hernandez and I thank him for his service to our great nation.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF EILEEN SEVANO

HON. JOSH GOTTHEIMER OF NEW JERSEY IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Eileen Sevano and her unwavering service as a pillar of the Teaneck Public School System for nearly forty years. On the occasion of her retirement, I applaud Eileen for an incredible forty years of teaching, spanning from Teaneck and Englewood Cliffs, in New Jersey to Brooklyn and Chinatown in New York. During the course of her career, Eileen touched the lives of many students and helped shape the minds of the next generation.

Window Arthur Ward once said, “The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The great teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.” As a public-school teacher in elementary and middle school, Eileen inspired her students both inside and outside of the classroom. For years, Eileen coached softball in Teaneck, empowering young women on the field. For fourteen years, as Director of Camp Kookoskoos, Eileen inspired young campers through the arts, science, sports, and by exploring and nurturing the environment. Eileen helped our young people create memories that last a lifetime. By focusing on the breadth of learning, even beyond the classroom, Eileen put the best interests of her students first and helped them grow and thrive.

Generations of students, who Eileen taught, have had limitless potential. They have and continue to launch new businesses in New Jersey, find cures for diseases like cancer, create the next breakthrough in technology, and much more. With the help of a supportive teacher like Eileen, all of this has been possible.

Nobody is surprised to hear that in retirement Eileen will continue her lifetime of service by volunteering with students in her community and taking care of her grandchildren. Encouraging learning and creating a supportive environment for young people is what Eileen enjoys most.

I am lucky to know Eileen and am profoundly thankful for her lifetime of service. I commend her for being a wonderful role model to my children and many students from across the Fifth District. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Eileen's hard work, and wish her, her husband Dennis, her
daughters Brenna and Perri, and her granddaughters Maddy and Sydney, all the best as Eileen celebrates this new chapter.

In closing, I join countless families across the Fifth District in saying thank you to Eileen for her dedication to children and to her community. The world just would not be the same without her hard work and inspiration.

SUPPORTING H.R. 2866—THE REDUCING BARRIERS FOR RELATIVE FOSTER PARENTS ACT

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL
OF ALABAMA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, on June 8th, I joined my colleague Rep. LLOYD SMUCKER, in introducing H.R. 2866—the Reducing Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act. This bipartisan bill encourages states to update their licensing requirements for foster parents in order to ensure that relatives have the ability to become foster parents.

Under current law, states have tremendous flexibility to set their own rules and guidelines for licensing foster homes. Unfortunately, many states have outdated regulations that make it difficult for family members to become foster parents. For example, some states fail to notify family members when relative children enter the foster care system. In other states, children can be removed from a family member’s home and thrown into the foster care system if the relative adult does not have a separate bedroom for the child.

H.R. 2866 would require that the Department of Health and Human Services create model licensing requirements. States then must either adopt the HHS requirements, or provide an explanation for why the licensing requirements are not ideal for the state. My home state of Alabama has updated, family-friendly licensing standards, so compliance with HHS standards will be simple. However, families residing in states with antiquated standards would face fewer barriers when trying to become a foster parent.

Many studies prove how beneficial placement with family members can be for foster children. According to Generations United, children in the care of family members experience higher stability, permanency, and positive mental health outcomes. Furthermore, allowing children to stay with their family members gives children the opportunity to maintain strong connections to their community.

I was very pleased that my bill was unanimously supported in the Ways and Means Committee, and I look forward to its passage through the House this evening.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
MR. LEO SHEY
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mr. Leo Shey of Pembroke Pines, Florida. Leo was a dear friend of mine who sadly passed away on June 13, 2017.

Leo was born in the Bronx, New York. He served honorably in the United States Navy, and after marrying his wife Bunny in 1950, they moved to Dade County in South Florida in 1958. As a mortgage banker, Leo dedicated many years of his career specializing in low-income housing in Dade and Broward counties, and also served on the board of directors of the Park Place Association for 40 years. Through his contributions, Leo made a profound impact in South Florida.

Leo went on to establish himself in Atlanta, Georgia where he emerged as an ally of the African American business community. At the forefront of civil rights activism, Leo became an esteemed member of the 100 percent Wrong Club.

Distinguishing himself through extraordinary involvement in the community, Leo touched countless lives. He is survived by his wife Bunny, and adored by father of Nina Voges (Dan), Michael (Barbara), like-a-son Seth Brown, and predeceased by Douglass. Beloved wise grandfather of Tim (Rachel), Caitlin (Todd), Sherri and Terri (Cesar), and blended family Danielle (Jorge Dal Valle, Aria and Jayley) and Sean Voges (Alice), Adoring Pop-pop of Wilhelmina, Sebastian and Violette Leo.

Mr. Speaker, words cannot express how deeply saddened I am for the passing of such a kind soul. I was devastated to learn of the death of one of the nicest people I have ever known. Leo was not a large man, but he was most among men. It is with a heavy heart that I extend my deepest congratulations to George Canon’s family and friends, particularly his wife Monica. He was a true community leader and his legacy of service will endure in New York’s 21st District.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GEORGE
CZAHOR AND MADISON HEINRICH
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. CZAHOR of Fort Myers and Madison Heinrich of Naples. It has come to my attention that these two students have been selected to represent the state of Florida at the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders in Lowell, Massachusetts later this month.

This Congress is an event headed by the National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists and is an honors-only program whose intention is to motivate the top students of the country, who are interested in a career in science or technology, to achieve their goals. The Academy selects all delegates based on nominations from teachers, proven academic excellence, and leadership ability. Further, their alumni include Nobel Prize winners, top scientific university deans, and other leaders in the STEM field.

It is encouraging to know that Dan and Madison are among these five hundred nationally selected students to go to the conference.
I look forward to the work these two individuals will do in the years to come and wish them the best of luck in their future academic studies.

Recognizing Kylie Hutchison, Ashley Joplin, Katriana Sefcovic and Paige Simpson

Hon. Ken Buck
Of Colorado
In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize four high school students who were selected to represent the state of Colorado as delegates at the Congress for Future Medical Leaders. The students are Kylie Hutchison, Ashley Joplin, Katriana Sefcovic, and Paige Simpson.

The Congress of Future Medical Leaders is an honors program that recognizes exceptional high school students who are pursuing a career’s as a physician or in medical research. These students are the future leaders of the medical field and our country. Through their studies, they have embodied the meaning of hard work and perseverance to achieve their goals, and will better the health of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to recognize these students from the fourth district of Colorado for their hard work and service to our community. I wish them the best in their future endeavors.

Honoring the Life and Achievements of Mrs. Ida Johnson

Hon. Jim Costa
Of California
In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and achievements of Mrs. Ida Johnson. Mrs. Johnson dedicated her career to serving her community, both in education and as an advocate for low income youth and families in Merced County. Mrs. Johnson was passionate about the pursuit of equality, driven by her love and compassion for others, and committed to creating opportunities for students and teachers in Merced County.

Mrs. Johnson was born in Nashville, Tennessee. She attended the University of San Francisco, where she earned a Bachelor’s degree in Human Relations and Organizational Behavior in 1984. Mrs. Johnson then continued her education at Chapman University, where she received a Master’s degree in Educational Systems Management in 1988. She worked on gender equity as Director and Coordinator for the California Department of Education for almost 12 years, and also worked for 33 years for the Merced County Schools in various capacities, including teaching computing and business classes.

Beyond her professional career, Mrs. Johnson was elected to the Merced Union High School Governing Board in 2005, where she served 8 years as a Trustee. Additionally, Mrs. Johnson was involved with numerous community and educational organizations, including the Boys and Girls Club, League of Women Voters, and the 4-H Club. She also worked with the Merced Equals Program, where she spent countless hours providing teachers, parents, and students with the tools necessary to improve math skills within the county, and she secured a significant amount of grant money.

With Mrs. Johnson’s passing, Merced County mourns her loss but also rejoices in her lasting impact and legacy. The lives Mrs. Johnson touched with her career in education and devotion to her community will not be forgotten. Her spirit will live on in the hearts of her family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life and achievements of Mrs. Ida Johnson. Mrs. Johnson’s achievements cannot be measured through grants or educational programs, but in the lives she touched. Mrs. Johnson’s trajectory as an educator has given students and teachers in Merced County a role model to admire and emulate as they move towards the future.

Travel Restrictions

Hon. Ted Poe
Of Texas
In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last year Al-Qaeda nearly downed an airliner in Somalia using an explosive disguised as a laptop. This bomb got past X-ray machines and blew a gaping hole in the aircraft.

Al-Qaeda has been working for years to create sophisticated explosives that can target airplanes. It came as no surprise that last week the Department of Homeland Security announced new security restrictions on electronics on board certain U.S.-bound flights. These new restrictions are deadly serious. Al-Qaeda has units deployed in places like Syria, Pakistan, and Turkey that are dedicated to planning attacks against the West.

The hysteria around this announcement is purely political. Everyone should be concerned about the growing threat from al-Qaeda. We must not allow politics to divide us in the face of a mortal enemy seeking to kill and injure as many Americans as possible.

I commend the Department of Homeland Security for responding to crucial intelligence and taking this step to protect the American people. And that’s just the way it is.

Briahna Horton

Hon. Ed Perlmutter
Of Colorado
In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Briahna Horton for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Briahna Horton is a student at Oberon Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities in her life.

The dedication demonstrated by Briahna Horton is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Briahna Horton for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

Honoring Technical Sergeant Marshall Price

Hon. Matt Gaetz
Of Florida
In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with great respect and admiration to honor Technical Sergeant Marshall Price.

After 12 years of active duty, Technical Sergeant Price is medically retiring from the United States Air Force following injuries sustained during his deployments to Africa. Technical Sergeant Price has been a dedicated servant to our Nation since 2005, when he first enlisted at the age of 19, and today we celebrate his service.

Throughout his notable career, Technical Sergeant Price has been stationed at Moody AFB in Valdosta, Georgia, Fairchild AFB in Spokane, Washington, and Hurlburt Field in Florida’s First Congressional District. Marshall has been an active supporter of our national security interests, participating in various undisclosed missions in both Djibouti and Afghanistan. Additionally, he has earned recognition for his distinguished service from the 9th Special Operations Squadron.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, and a grateful community, I am privileged to recognize Technical Sergeant Price for his commitment to our country and the sacrifices he has made on its behalf. On his retirement from the United States Air Force, I thank him and his family for his honorable service, and wish them all the best going forward.

In Recognition of Edward Babor, President of the Taminent Regular Democratic Club of New York City

Hon. Carolyn B. Maloney
Of New York
In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my dear friend and longtime staff member Edward Babor, as he steps down from his twenty-six year tenure as the president of the Taminent Regular Democratic Club.

The Taminent Regular Democratic Club (the Taminent) was founded in 1933 in the Astoria neighborhood of Queens County. Today, the members of the Taminent work tirelessly to advocate for Astoria residents on issues affecting the community. I have attended countless events hosted by the Taminent and I am extraordinarily grateful to Ed Babor for his...
Corporal Costello’s commitment to serving others did not start until 1999 when he began volunteering with the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office. In fact, he served with the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War before starting his career for a building supply company, where he worked for twenty years. As a volunteer with the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office, Corporal Costello served as a member of the community advisory committee, assisting police officers in Loudoun County, but soon afterwards, the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office offered him a position on the force. Despite his age difference with the majority of the other trainees, Corporal Costello passed the six-month, rigorous training and served for three years with the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office and twelve more years with the Purcellville Police Department.

As an officer, Corporal Costello became well known for his information technology skills, helping advance the Purcellville Police Department’s communications systems and managing the department’s accreditation process. In fact just last month, The Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission unanimously voted to award the Purcellville Police Department with its second re-accreditation certificate, largely due to the framework that Corporal Costello has set up over the years.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire 10th District, I thank Corporal Rick Costello for his dedicated career of service to Loudoun County, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing a truly commendable public servant. I wish him and his family all of the best in their future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF NANCY KRUPIARZ FOR HER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE WITH THE MICHIGAN TRAILS AND GREENWAYS ALLIANCE

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Nancy Krupiarz for her outstanding career working on behalf of the State of Michigan and its residents. As Executive Director for the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, Ms. Krupiarz has helped promote a healthy and more prosperous Michigan by making it one of the foremost trail states in the country.

Originally founded in 1986, the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is a nonprofit organization that advocates for the development of non-motorized trails throughout Michigan and provides a statewide voice for users of these trails. The group consists of approximately 1,000 members and provides information for Michiganders about trails throughout the state. Additionally, it advocates for assistance at the state and federal level to safeguard state and federal funding for the preservation of Michigan’s natural heritage and the upkeep of its trails. As a result of the efforts of the MTGA, Michigan has built and maintained a comprehensive network of over 3,000 miles of non-motorized trails throughout the state. These include cross-state trails from South Haven to Port Huron, as well as from Ironwood to Belle Isle.

Ms. Krupiarz has served as the organization’s executive director since the group’s founding and has been a catalyst for the growth and success of MTGA. Her tireless efforts have helped create a cohesive and effective organization that has effectively served the people of Michigan by coordinating efforts to build trails and preserve Michigan’s natural areas. Due to her leadership and efforts, Michigan now boasts the most trail miles out of any U.S. state and is widely recognized for its conservation efforts and outdoor recreation offerings. Ms. Krupiarz’s career with MTGA has left a lasting legacy, and it is my hope that the new leadership of the organization continues to build on her work in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Nancy Krupiarz for her leadership with the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance. Her career has resulted in a more livable state for Michigan’s residents.

BERNADETTE KIBERINKA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Bernadette Kibерinka for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Bernadette Kibérinka is a student at Everitt Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Bernadette Kiberinka is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Bernadette Kiberinka for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING THE MATTATUCK DRUM BAND

HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY
OF CONNECTICUT
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Mattatuck Drum Band, which this week commemorates the 250th Anniversary of its founding. This band is our nation’s oldest continuously active file and drum band and is a celebrated institution of our Waterbury, Connecticut community.

The Mattatuck Drum Band was founded in 1767, and over the past two and a half centuries, the band has been an invaluable group in supporting our country’s battles and preserving the heritage of our state and country. The band was first formed to play martial music for military training exercises in the towns of Farmingbury and Waterbury. The fifers and drummers were some of the earliest patriots to join the American Revolution in the
spring of 1775, at a time when musicians and drummers were instrumental in maintaining order and routine for military camps.

The band joined many parades in support of President Lincoln’s 1860 campaign, and then joined recruiting efforts to support the Union’s fight in the Civil War. Almost a century later during World War II, despite gas rationing and the deployment of many members, the band still turned out to play in parades to support our country’s service members and maintain solidarity during a difficult time for the country. Today, the dedicated members of the band keep musical tradition alive, and the band’s performance are an essential part of our community’s celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, the Mattatuck Drum Band celebrates our history in Connecticut and America, and its dedicated musicians and leaders have preserved an important part of our community’s heritage for the past 250 years. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor the band and everyone who has ensured its preservation and success here today.

RECOGNIZING PRIYA VULCHI

HON. BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Priya Vulchi—a remarkable young woman who, this year, earned the 2017 Congressional Gold Medal.

A resident of Princeton, Ms. Vulchi demonstrated an immeasurable passion for the education and advancement of our nation’s leaders. Working with Princeton Public Schools, Ms. Vulchi created a racial literacy tool to assist educators initiate dialogues around race-related topics in the classroom. Ms. Vulchi is also a co-founder of Princeton CHOOSE—a student-led organization that aims to overcome racism and inspire harmony through exposure, education and empowerment. Further, Ms. Vulchi is a published author of a racial literacy teaching tool that was piloted in Princeton Public school in the spring of 2016 and officially used by all 5th grade teachers in the school district for the 2016–2017 school years.

Along with her commitment to education, Ms. Vulchi pursued journalism and became the Head Copy Editor for her school’s monthly newspaper. Finally, Ms. Vulchi crossed the country in her travels to Hawaii to visit the Haleakal National Park. There she visited the Eats Maui Volcano and learned more about volcanism and the ecosystems of the National Park.

Beyond the Congressional Gold Medal program, extraordinary individuals like Ms. Vulchi exemplify the best and brightest of our nation’s future. As a resident of New Jersey’s 12th Congressional District, I couldn’t be more proud of her for taking up such a difficult challenge and making a positive change for themselves in their community.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in congratulating Ms. Vulchi on her amazing accomplishment.

HONORING STEVE SHISSLER ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER MORE THAN 26 YEARS OF SERVICE IN LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

HON. SCOTT PERRY
OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I offer my sincere congratulations to my constituent, Lieutenant Steve Shissler, on his upcoming retirement after more than 26 years of service to the Hampden Township Police Department in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. LT. Shissler climbed the ranks of the Hampden Township Police Department, starting as a patrolman, then to Corporal, Sergeant and, ultimately, Lieutenant. He has been in charge of the Department’s Criminal Investigation Division for the last several years. LT. Shissler’s tireless dedication, professionalism and sacrifice has touched the lives of countless people and challenged all with whom he served to be the best. His legacy of service to our community truly is admirable.

On behalf of Pennsylvania’s Fourth Congressional District, I thank and congratulate Steve Shissler on his service to our Nation and wish him and his family continued great success in their future adventures.

IN RECOGNITION OF SEAN RATTAY ON HIS OFFER OF APPOINTMENT TO ATTEND THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA
OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay special tribute to an outstanding student from Ohio’s Fifth Congressional District. I am pleased to announce that Sean Rattay of Monclova, Ohio has been offered an appointment to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Sean’s offer of appointment permits him to attend the United States Naval Academy this fall with the incoming Class of 2021. Attending one of our nation’s military academies not only offers the opportunity to serve our country, but also guarantees a world-class education while undertaking one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of their lives.

Sean brings an enormous amount of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming Class of 2021. While attending St. John’s Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio, Sean was a member of the National Honor Society, a peer tutor and a school ambassador. Throughout high school, Sean participated in varsity football, earning numerous achievements and awards along the way. Sean also led Christmas on Campus and volunteered at Swan Creek Care Center, an assisted living center in Toledo, Ohio. I am confident that Sean will carry the lessons of his student and athletic leadership to the Naval Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Sean Rattay on his offer of appointment to the United States Naval Academy. Our service academies offer the finest military training and education available. I am positive that Sean will excel during his career at Annapolis, and I ask my colleagues to join me in extending their best wishes to him as he begins his service to our Nation.

HON. ED PERLMUTTER
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Dante Porchetta for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Dante Porchetta is a student at Wayne Carle Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Dante Porchetta is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Dante Porchetta for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

JEFFREY PASSANTINO

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Jeffrey Passantino, who was drafted by the Chicago Cubs in the 2017 Major League Baseball draft. Passantino is an alumnus of Bishop Verot High School in Fort Myers, and most recently played at Limpcomb University. This season at Limpcomb, Jeffrey had a 4–3 record with a 3.09 Earned Run Average and 95 strikeouts. During his career at Bishop Verot, he helped lead the Vikings to three straight state title appearances, which included one championship in 2011. It was during this time that he also posted an impressive 22–4 record on the mound.

I would like to congratulate Jeffrey for his hard work, dedication and leadership on and off the field. I look forward to hearing about his future accomplishments.

HONORING TONY NAPOLI

HON. J. LUIS CORREA
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take some time today to honor one of my constituents, Mr. Tony Napoli, for his immense dedication to serving Santa Ana’s youth.

Mr. Napoli is an accomplished businessman with a background in technology, having graduated from the Connecticut College of Electricians as an electronic technician. But Mr.
Napoli is far more than just a businessman. In his spare time, Mr. Napoli volunteers as a Chamber Ambassador to the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce, and his great service earned him the Ambassador of the Year Award in 2011.

Mr. Napoli fully embodies the value of community service in all aspects of his life. Concerned with local high school graduation rates and skill level of recent graduates, Mr. Napoli with the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce partnered with the Santa Ana Unified School District to start the High School Incorporated Program, a unique collaboration that seeks to provide vocational training and career advice to high school students.

Passionate about investing in youth, Mr. Napoli chose to give even more of his free time to this program, especially the Automotive and Transportation division. Mr. Napoli also serves as a Business Advisor, advising the division on budget matters and providing valuable mentorship while also consistently visiting the inspirational students in class.

Mr. Napoli's dedication and service has helped raise the graduation rate for the program to 95 percent with many students already fully certified and well equipped for their bright futures.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Napoli is an example to us all of the incredible value found in community engagement. I am honored to recognize Mr. Napoli for doing his part in bridging the gap, and thank him for the positive impact he has made on the Santa Ana and Orange County community.

HONORING THE WESTERN HERITAGE OF COLORADO SPRINGS

HON. DOUG LAMBORN OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the proud and important Western Heritage of Colorado Springs.

Whether it is the 81st Western Street Breakfast, the 77th Annual Pikes Peak of Bust Rodeo, or the 68th Pikes Peak Range Ride, our Colorado Springs community has supported its heritage for many generations. I would also like to note that the proceeds from these events go to supporting our brave men and women in uniform at our five local military installations.

If you are one of the 10,000 people at the Street Breakfast, the many thousands at the Rodeo, or the two hundred plus Range Riders, you are taking part in a long and commendable tradition. And, with your continued enthusiastic support, it’s one I know will last forever.

Thank you so much to the staffers, board members, and dedicated volunteers who make each of these events possible. Each June and July Colorado Springs shows the entire world what is so special about the heritage of the West.

IN HONOR OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT GEORGE MASON MAP CLINIC

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the award-winning Mason and Partners (MAP) health care clinic and to congratulate George Mason University School of Nursing and its partners on the establishment of a permanent MAP Clinic in Manassas Park, Virginia. The clinic provides residents of medically underserved areas with a variety of health care services, including physicals, screenings, health care counseling, and acute primary care treatment while, at the same time, offering George Mason University nursing students and those in related studies the invaluable practical experience of treating and counseling patients who utilize the clinic.

George Mason launched its first MAP clinic in 2013, originally offering its services at the Manassas Park Community Center. Since then, the operation has expanded to three Northern Virginia sites while also broadening the services they provide. The clinic strives to serve as a bridge for patients with no access to healthcare until they are able to arrange for more formal healthcare coverage for themselves.

The MAP clinic program has also greatly benefited our students at George Mason University. By offering an active learning lab, nursing and health and human services students are able to receive real-life experience working on interprofessional teams, a learning opportunity that is not available to many students across the nation. These clinical opportunities have been so well-received that the federal government’s Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) has awarded the school $2 million to support the education of Mason School of Nursing students.

Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in celebrating with you and our colleagues the establishment of the first permanent structure of the MAP clinic in Manassas Park, Virginia. In addition, I ask that you join me in congratulating the George Mason University School of Nursing and its partners at the Prince William Health District, the Parks and Recreation and Education Departments of the City of Manassas Park, the city’s Community Development Office and interim director Calvin O’Dell, the Potomac Health Foundation, and the students and faculty of George Mason’s College of Health and Human Services, for the extraordinary success of this visionary, nurse-led program. I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

HONORING MAYOR MATTHEW MARCHANT’S SERVICE TO THE CITY OF CARROLLTON, TEXAS

HON. KENNY MARCHANT OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my son, Matthew H. Marchant, for his public service as Mayor of the City of Carrollton, Texas.

Matthew finishes his six outstanding years in office as mayor of Carrollton later this evening, but that will not end his passionate commitment to serving his fellow citizens. Local leaders play a tremendous role in improving the quality of life on a daily basis for their residents and visitors—Matthew’s commitment to this leadership on both a local and work in Carrollton is to be wholeheartedly congratulated. His leadership and service have touched many, and many more will be able to enjoy the benefits for years to come.

Matthew was first elected mayor of Carrollton in 2011 and was re-elected in 2014. Prior to his election as mayor, Matthew served as councilmember for nine years from 2002 to 2011. In conjunction with Matthew’s role as councilmember and mayor, he served in other leadership positions including Chairman of the Redevelopment Subcommittee, member of the Transit Oriented Development Subcommittee, member of the Carrollton Festival at the Switchyard Subcommittee, member of the Audit and Finance Committee, and member of the Judicial Committee. In addition, Matthew has served as Carrollton’s voting member on the Regional Transportation Council.

Starting in 2011, Matthew led Carrollton through an economic development campaign to invest in the city’s future. He championed an innovative project to revitalize Downtown Carrollton with new restaurants, retail, and greenspaces, while capturing the historic feel of Carrollton’s past. In 2015, the City of Carrollton was awarded the “Best Public Improvement Project” by the Texas Downtown Association for its downtown square. In 2010, striving to introduce new patrons to the Carrollton Square, Matthew worked with local and national musicians to host the Festival at the Switchyard concert series. Last year, more than 30,000 people were on hand to discover the unique stores, eclectic restaurants, and music all in the heart of Downtown Carrollton.

During Matthew’s tenure as mayor, he has worked diligently with the Carrollton Police and Fire Departments to equip them with the tools needed to serve and protect the city’s citizens. As a result, Carrollton now has one of the lowest crime rates in its recent history. Matthew collaborated with neighboring cities to secure funding for the North Texas Emergency Communications Center which was launched in 2016 as a regional emergency dispatch command. Additionally, Matthew oversaw the construction of the new Carrollton Police Department Headquarters and Fire Station 48 which have helped lower the response time for medical emergencies by 12 percent across the city.

As Matthew leaves office, the property tax base of Carrollton is approximately $13.3 billion, an impressive increase of 49 percent since his first election as mayor. In addition, Matthew has met his election promise of lowering the property tax rate for homeowners. During his 15 years serving in Carrollton city government, the population of the city expanded from around 115,000 to nearly 135,000, making it one of the top 25 most populous cities in Texas. Additionally, many small and large corporations such as AmerenCure Bergamot, Inter-tile, CyrusOne, and others have also joined Carrollton’s growing and diverse economic landscape.
In 1998, Matthew earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma. Matthew continued his studies at the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, Texas where he received his law degree in 2000. Outside of his duties as a public servant, Matthew works as a legal counsel at Holly Frontier Corporation. He has been a lifetime resident of the Carrollton-area where he lives with his wife, Lindsay, and two children, Kendall and Hayden.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing my son, Matthew Marchant, for his service to the people of Carrollton.

De’Von Rewerts
HON. ED PERLMUTTER
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud De’Von Rewerts for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

De’Von Rewerts is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by De’Von Rewerts is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to De’Von Rewerts for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

CELEBRATING THE SERVICE OF THOMAS O’KEEFE
HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Thomas O’Keefe for his dedication to the safety of our nation and the well-being of his fellow citizens.

Mr. O’Keefe began his long career in government in 1984, working for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. In 2003, he transferred to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, where he has served diligently for the past fourteen years. As a member of Customs and Border Protection, Mr. O’Keefe worked each day to protect the security of the United States and its citizens.

In addition to his work for the federal government, Mr. O’Keefe played an active role in the National Treasury Employees Union, serving as President of Northern New York’s Chapter since 1995. The Chapter grew dramatically during his tenure, increasing both in membership and territorial reach. As Chapter President, Mr. O’Keefe fought for the rights of employees and sought to secure fair treatment for everyone he represented.

I want to thank Mr. O’Keefe for his years of work for the United States Government and the people of Upstate New York. His commitment to protecting our nation exhibits his strong character, and we commend his fine service.

HONORING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BLUE GRASS ARMY DEPOT
HON. ANDY BARR
OF KENTUCKY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the marking of a very special occasion—the 75th Anniversary of the Blue Grass Army Depot in Richmond, Kentucky. Since 1942, the Blue Grass Army Depot’s dedicated civilian workforce has been called upon time after time to fulfill their critical role as key ammunition suppliers to our nation’s joint warfighters by providing ready and reliable ammo at the right place and right time, every time.

Throughout the course of our nation’s history, our great success in establishing our country as a beacon of hope to the world has been largely defined by the everyday bravery and dedication of individual citizens. The Blue Grass Army Depot has exemplified that bravery and dedication through direct civilian support of our warfighters.

From World War II to the Korean War, the War in Vietnam, the Gulf War, and through today’s ongoing Global War on Terrorism, whenever and whenever our men and women are engaged in conflict and risking their lives fighting on the front lines, the Blue Grass Army Depot has been there.

The civilian employees of the Blue Grass Army Depot are amongst the thousands of often unsung heroes who have provided, and continue to provide, unwavering support for our nation’s ongoing fight to defend and preserve democracy and freedom. Their work has ensured that our nation’s joint war fighters are victorious, and sustains the reputation of the United States Armed Forces as the world’s preeminent military.

The Blue Grass Army Depot and its workforce are to be commended for their service, dedication to duty, and loyalty to our nation. I join with a grateful nation in thanking them and wishing them the best in years to come.

It is my privilege to represent such an outstanding military installation and civilian workforce among my constituents in Kentucky’s Sixth Congressional District, and to honor the Blue Grass Army Depot and its workforce before the United States House of Representatives.

INTRODUCTION OF BANNING THE USE OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES ON AIRPLANES ACT OF 2017
HON. ELEANOR HOMES NORTON
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Banning the Use of Electronic Cigarettes on Airplanes Act of 2017. The bill prohibits the use of electronic cigarettes and vaping devices on commercial airplanes by including use of these devices within the definition of smoking. Smoking tobacco products on commercial airplanes has been banned for years, but with the increase in use of electronic cigarettes and vaping devices in their place, it is necessary to update our laws to reflect this new nuisance and health risk on airplanes. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued a final rule in March 2016 banning the use of these devices on airplanes, but Congress should make a permanent, statutory change to include the use of these devices within the definition of “smoking.”

Last Congress, my bill received bipartisan support from the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and was added as an amendment to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill, the Aviation Innovation, Reform, and Reauthorization (AIRR) Act. The amendment was also included in the Senate’s long-term FAA reauthorization bill.

Electronic cigarette use has increased over the last decade with the increased education of the general public about the dangers and public health threats caused by traditional cigarettes to smokers and nonsmokers alike. For example, between 2011 and 2016, e-cigarette use among adults doubled. Researchers and public health experts have voiced concerns over the use of electronic cigarettes because there are still so many unknowns about the chemicals these devices can produce. The American Lung Association cited many concerns about the lack of regulation of e-cigarettes because they are being marketed to the public while the potential harm from secondhand e-cigarette emissions is unknown.

ALA has identified two studies that show formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, benzene, tobacco-specific nitrosamines, and other harmful irritants coming from e-cigarette emissions. In addition, the temperature of an e-cigarette can affect how harmful the chemicals are, but with no configuration standards, it is too difficult to uniformly assess the health effects of smoking electronic devices.

For example, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a proposed rule in 2014 that would extend new regulatory authority to e-cigarettes by subjecting e-cigarettes to registration and product listing requirements, restrictions on marketing products prior to FDA review, and a prohibition on providing free samples as with traditional tobacco products.

It has been over 25 years since legislation was passed banning smoking on domestic flights in the United States. In the 1960s, the U.S. Surgeon General identified smoking as a cause of increased mortality and by 1986, the U.S. Surgeon General had named secondhand smoke a serious health risk. The National Academy of Sciences, in its report “The Airliner Cabin Environment: Air Quality and Safety,” recommended a ban on smoking on all domestic commercial flights. The Association of Flight Attendants can be credited with urging the smoking ban due to the negative health impacts flights attendants suffered working in cramped, closed-off spaces when a third or more passengers smoked in-flight. Congress used this information to include an amendment authored by then-House Representative DICK DURBIN (D–IL) in the Federal Aviation Act that made domestic flights of two hours or less smoke-free. By 1990, this smoking ban was
extended to all domestic flights of six hours or less, and, in 2000, the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act made all flights to and from the United States smokefree. All of this was done even in the face of the strong tobacco industry’s opposition because of the undeniable health impacts of cigarettes and cigarette smoke. Many flyers do not remember a time without “No Smoking” signs located throughout a commercial airplane.

In 2016, DOT issued its final rule to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes on U.S. airplanes. Legislation is necessary to make this update applicable to all airlines, and permanent. Under current FAA policy, battery-powered electronic cigarettes, vaporizers, vape pens, atomizers, and electronic nicotine systems are prohibited in checked baggage, and the FAA recommends that such devices only be carried in the aircraft cabins because of safety issues.

The current statutory smoking ban applies to the smoking of tobacco products on all scheduled passenger flights and on scheduled passenger flight segments on foreign air carriers in the U.S. and between the U.S. and foreign countries, unless a waiver is granted based on bilateral negotiations. The Banning the Use of Electronic Cigarettes on Airplanes Act of 2017 will amend the statutory definition of smoking in 49 U.S.C. 41706 to include the use of electronic cigarettes, defined as “a device that delivers nicotine or other substances to a user of the device in the form of a vapor that is inhaled to simulate the experience of smoking.”

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

THE CHARITY TRANSPARENCY ACT

HON. TED POE
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in 2001 the U.S. Government shut down the Texas-based Holy Land Foundation for its role in sending money to Hamas. But some of the Holy Land Foundation’s employees are now working at 501(c)(3) “charities” that are leading the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement in the U.S. against Israel.

Charitable American donors have no way of knowing of the questionable histories of some of the employees of these charities before they donate. My bill, The Charity Transparency Act, will require organizations applying for 501(c)(3) status to disclose if any of their key employees once worked for such organizations.

It would require no new paperwork and give the IRS no new authorities. It would just require one more disclosure on the already existing IRS documents.

It would also not penalize any of these charities. It would simply protect charitable American citizens and arm them with the information they need to make better informed decisions regarding where they donate their hard earned money.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

And that’s just the way it is.

DIANA ROGOZYAN
HON. ED PERLMUTTER
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Diana Rogozyan for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Diana Rogozyan is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Diana Rogozyan is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Diana Rogozyan for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING RAUL ORTIZ

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from my constituent Raul Ortiz, age 8, to President Trump on World Refugee Day.

DEAR PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP. Please receive a respectful greeting in my name and the name of all the children and families that are part of ILIJAC’s Child Soldiers United for Freedom group. My name is Raul Ortiz and I come from Honduras. I want to express to you my fear for the situation of many refugees that have arrived to the United States of America seeking refuge. I must share with you our sadness that we live in because our countries of origin are full of crime and violence. This is why our parents risked our lives to bring us to safety in the USA. Here we are safe and have hope to see another tomorrow.

Mr. President, we respectfully ask for your help, we ask you, a great man that is a responsible person dedicated to the USA, to please meet with us and listen to our stories and consider granting us protection.

Abraham Lincoln is my favorite president. He ran as president under the National Union Party which was the name used by the Republican party for the 1864 presidential election, during the Civil War. The Republican party at this time under President Lincoln was successful in abolishing slavery.

My favorite president Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves so I believe and have faith you President Trump can do the same thing with granting freedom to the Central American refugees just like me.

God Bless You President Trump and God Bless The USA!

Respectfully,

RAUL ORTIZ,
8 yrs old.

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mr. John Aloysius Shanley. John was a loving husband and father. He passed away peacefully on June 5, 2017, in the comfort of his home, surrounded by his family, after a hard fought battle against ALS.

John was known for his sense of humor, his youthful heart, and his successful business, P.G. Tire Inc. Known to his family as “PopPop,” John is survived by his wife Marlene Shanley and four loving children Genevie and Charles Hawk, Nicholle and Kenneth Simpson, Joseph and Natalie Shanley, and Marilyn Shanley, as well as his sister, Sharon Shanley of Las Vegas, NV. He has 7 grandchildren, Andrew Simpson, Ryleigh Simpson, Elizabeth Hawk, Colin Hawk, Maggie Shanley, Jack Shanley and Baisie Ingoglia.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. John Aloysius Shanley will be remembered as a humorous and humble man, beloved by his family and friends. I am very pleased to honor his life and legacy here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends during this most difficult time.

SAM KEATING
HON. FRANCIS ROONEY
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Sam Keating and his recent selection to the San Diego Padres in the 2017 MLB draft. Keating, a right-handed pitcher, was selected in the fourth round and has already signed with the organization.

Keating’s high school career was one to be remembered as he led the Canterbury Cougars to back-to-back Class 3A championships. In his senior year, he went 11-1 on the mound with a 1.06 Earned Run Average and 93 strikeouts.

I would like to congratulate Keating for taking the first step into the professional realm. His hard-work and dedication are paying off, and I look forward to hearing about his successes in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING CATHLYN BAUDER, SADIE KRAUSE, MIGUEL ORTIZ, DEVAN RUDER, ASHTON SHOE-MAKER, BRENNA SYDOW, ATHENA TAYLOR, AND KYLE YAMADA

HON. KEN BUCK
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize eight high school students who have
RECOGNIZING MR. ED WAITS
HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT
OF ALABAMA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017
Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a gentleman from my home state whose work in the area of respiratory care has undoubtedly saved countless lives.

Mr. Ed Waits spent four decades working many long hours every day to serve patients in North Central, Alabama.

Mr. Waits began his career in 1954 working in inhalation therapy at the Walker Oxygen Company. Waits would deliver oxygen tanks to local hospitals.

In 1958, one of the hospitals Waits delivered oxygen to, West End Baptist Hospital, offered him a fulltime position as an inhalation therapist. As part of this position, he also provided the same service for Highland Baptist Hospital.

Mr. Waits’ workday began at 6:30 a.m. when most of us are just waking up. He would perform his duties at West End Hospital and then ride in a laundry truck to complete his days’ work at Highland Baptist.

The job performed by Mr. Waits could at times be very grueling. If the elevator did not work, he would have to carry oxygen tanks, weighing between 75 and 100 pounds, up five flights of stairs slung over his shoulder. Mr. Waits also had to be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as he was the only inhalation therapy employee. He performed this non-stop service for four years before additional employees were hired.

In 1963, Mr. Waits became the first president of the Alabama Society of Inhalation Therapists. He has also received honorary doctorate degrees from Miles College and the American Pulmonary Medical Institute. He retired from Princeton Baptist Hospital in 1994.

Mr. Waits is also a veteran of our military. He served in the United States Navy from 1951 to 1955.

He is a true servant to his community, his state and to our country. This is why, for posterity’s sake, his accomplishments should forever be enshrined.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. Ed Waits for his sacrifice and hard work on behalf of so many Alabamians over the years and for being an example for younger generations to look up to. —ELIAS VIGIL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017
Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Elias Vigil for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Elias Vigil is a student at Arvada K–8 School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Elias Vigil is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Elias Vigil for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

INTRODUCTION OF A BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT IN A CONCURRENT TRACK WITH THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE PROCESS AND COMMENDING ARAB AND MUSLIM-Majority STATES THAT HAVE IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017
Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bipartisan resolution supporting the concurrent-track approach to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. I want to acknowledge and thank Representative Eliot Engel, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and my friend and colleague across the aisle, Representative David Schweikert, for introducing this resolution with me.

There is no reason to parse words: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict presents an immensely difficult challenge. There are no easy answers. Successful United States Presidential administrations have pursued peace agreements between the parties for over 30 years, from the 1982 Reagan Plan for Middle East Peace to the 1993 Oslo Accords, Camp David Summit, Clinton Parameters, Annapolis Conference, and efforts to restart the peace process under the Obama Administration. Today, it seems as if progress has ground to a halt.

The relationship between America and Israel is paramount. We stand with our ally and continue to support efforts to move the peace process forward, whenever and in any way possible. Despite lack of progress, Israel and some of her Arab neighbors have worked quietly and behind the scenes to improve bilateral relations in recent years. Common threats posed by Iran and the Islamic State have allowed for new limited dialogues to emerge. However limited they may be, these interactions present a new approach for improving the outlook of the Middle East.

The concurrent-track approach, sometimes referred to as the “outside-in” approach, encourages Arab and Muslim-majority states to improve bilateral relations with Israel, as Israel and the Palestinian Authority concurrently work to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Although there are rarely, if ever, easy solutions to challenges as complex as bringing lasting peace to the Middle East, Congress should encourage and support those states willing to engage in that endeavor.

The resolution expresses support for the concurrent track approach, and commends Arab and Muslim-majority states that have already taken steps to improve their bilateral relations with Israel. I, like nearly all of my colleagues in Congress, continue to support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, negotiated between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and resulting in two states for two peoples, living side-by-side in peace, security, and mutual recognition. I believe this is the only way to ensure that both the Israeli people and the Palestinian people can have a sovereign homeland. The inability to achieve a two-state solution threatens the State of Israel’s security and identity as the democratic homeland of the Jewish people, just as it impedes the well-being and self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Earlier this month, we marked the 50th Anniversary of Israel’s Six-Day War and the anniversary of the re-unification of Jerusalem. For the 19 years Jerusalem was divided, Jews were forced from the Jewish Quarter and the Old City, barred from Holy sites, and Jewish cemeteries and synagogues were vandalized. In the days leading up to the six-day war, the armies of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria massed on Israeli borders, threatening the Jewish people with annihilation for the second time in just two decades. The Israeli people fought for their survival and achieved a miraculous victory. In reuniting the city, Jerusalem once again became a place where people of all faiths can worship.

Despite this victory, the final status of Jerusalem and the safety of the State of Israel and its people, regardless of ethnicity or religion, will not be secured until peace is achieved. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce this bipartisan resolution today, and urge its speedy consideration and passage by this body.

RECOGNIZING MASTER AT ARMS FIRST CLASS JOSEPH PELLICANO FROM PACE, FLORIDA
HON. MATT GAETZ
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017
Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the incredibly heroic Master at Arms
First Class Joseph Pellicano from Pace, Florida, who is stationed at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, for the role that he played in saving the life of young Kaysin Willis. On January 16, 2017, MA1 Pellicano, while en route to work at NAS Whiting Field, drove upon a two-car accident and stopped to render aid. A small child had been injured in the incident and upon realization that the child was unresponsive and had no vital signs, MA1 Pellicano began CPR on the child. He was able to successfully resuscitate the child, and then assisted the medical team as they prepared the child for transport to the local children’s hospital. The child’s injuries were extensive, yet Kaysin was able to make a full recovery and is now home with his family. This would not have been possible without the quick thinking and selfless initiative that MA1 Pellicano demonstrated on this day. I would like to extend my gratitude to MA1 Pellicano for his valiant efforts that resulted in saving this young child’s life. His exceptional character is evidenced by his courageous and extraordinary actions.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, and a grateful community, I am privileged to recognize Master at Arms First Class Joseph Pellicano for his bravery and thank him for his service.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF DANIELLE BERMUDEZ

HON. JIM COSTA
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Ms. Danielle Bermudez. Ms. Bermudez has been chosen as a Fulbright scholar, the first to ever be chosen from the University of California, Merced. Her accomplishment brings great pride to the Merced community and to all who have witnessed her hard work.

The idea behind the Fulbright Program began in 1945, when Senator J. William Fulbright introduced a bill to the United States Congress calling for the use of surplus war property in order to fund the ‘promotion of international good will through the exchange of students in the fields of education, culture, and science.’ President Harry S. Truman signed that bill into law in 1946 and Congress created the Fulbright Program. This international educational exchange program has fostered bilateral relationships, allowing both citizens and governments of other countries to work together with the United States and set joint priorities to shape the program’s shared needs. Since the beginning of the program, there have been more than 360,000 Fulbright participants from the United States and other countries and Fulbright alumni from 14 countries have been awarded 57 Nobel prizes, 82 Pulitzer prizes, and 37 alumni have become heads of state or government.

The Fulbright program currently awards approximately 1,900 United States student grants annually in all fields of study. In March 2017, Ms. Bermudez was selected as a Fulbright scholar, a fourth year doctoral student in the Interdisciplinary Humanities at the University of California, Merced. She was nominated for Outstanding Student Leadership in 2015, 2016, and 2017. She has also demonstrated an exceptional academic and professional record, outstanding personal qualifications, and language preparation among many other qualifications to receive this award. Additionally, she served as an intern for California Assemblyman Adam Gray, and in 2014, Ms. Bermudez shows her dedication and hard work as the first student from the University of California, Merced to ever receive a Fulbright scholarship.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the achievements of Ms. Danielle Bermudez for receiving this prestigious award. I know she will continue to encourage the Fulbright program’s goals of promoting mutual understanding among nations through her engagement in her host community and look forward to hear what else she will accomplish next.

IN HONOR OF FREEDOM HIGH SCHOOL’S ODYSSEY OF THE MIND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK
OF VIRGINIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a group of students from Freedom High School, who won the Odyssey of the Mind World Championship on May 27, 2017. Leading up to this global competition in Michigan, the Freedom High School team won a Virginia Regional competition as well as the Virginia state championship, and these extraordinary achievements show how far dedication, hard work, and commitment to teamwork can take a group as they competed with some of the best student teams across the world.

The Odyssey of the Mind World Championship is a STEM-based scholastic competition in which students devise innovative solutions to challenges, such as assembling vehicles and integrating them into timed skits. These problems and programs allow students to convert their ideas and knowledge into tangible results in a stimulating and competitive atmosphere. During the world championship, each team participated in three competitions, including a spontaneous problem solving challenge, a style competition, and finally a long term problem, which the team has worked on for 6 to 7 months.

Under the leadership of Coaches Bill and Judy Munley, Freedom High School’s championship winning team consisted of seniors Michael Munley, Aditi Shukla, Manisha Kusuma, Apekchha Pradhan and juniors Virginia Campbell, Zander Rodriguez, and Sarana Adhikari. While the team has qualified for 5 world competitions in the past 10 years, this is the only Loudoun County team to ever win the championship at the global level.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring WE Kayak on the date of the organization’s second annual Blessing of the Fleet. WE Kayak provides structured recreational activities accessible to all members of the Downriver community accessible to all members of the Downriver community in the Grosse Ile’s waterways. Originally started in 2012, WE Kayak is a Grosse Ile-based organization that organizes weekly paddles available to the general public on the waterways in and around Grosse Ile, Michigan. The organization is active from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and has grown substantially from its initial group of six kayakers. Today, WE Kayak hosts several dozen members of the community each week to participate in exploring the waters while engaging with each other. The organization also hosts an annual Blessing of the Fleet, where WE Kayak, along with other members of the community, honor Kayakers who have passed and bless those who regularly go out on the water. This free community initiative has helped engage Grosse Ile residents while providing opportunities for physical recreation.

Initiatives like WE Kayak help bring the community together while allowing members to explore and appreciate the natural beauty around the Grosse Ile area. As the only organized public paddle on Grosse Ile, WE Kayak has played a key role in promoting physical activity and engagement while introducing new members of the organization to the community of like-minded kayakers and nature enthusiasts. The group also serves as a forum for individuals to exchange information about other water sports events in the area, and it is my hope that WE Kayak continues to provide access opportunities for recreation for all individuals in the Grosse Ile area in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing WE Kayak on the date of the organization’s second annual Blessing of the Fleet. WE Kayak has helped individuals explore Grosse Ile’s waterways and foster a strong community.

IN RECOGNITION OF WE KAYAK GROSSE ILE ON THE DATE OF ITS SECOND ANNUAL BLESSING OF THE FLEET

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize WE Kayak Grosse Ile on the date of the organization’s second annual Blessing of the Fleet. WE Kayak provides structured recreational activities accessible to all members of the Downriver community accessible to all members of the Downriver community in the Grosse Ile’s waterways.

Originally started in 2012, WE Kayak is a Grosse Ile-based organization that organizes weekly paddles available to the general public on the waterways in and around Grosse Ile, Michigan. The organization is active from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and has grown substantially from its initial group of six kayakers. Today, WE Kayak hosts several dozen members of the community each week to participate in exploring the waters while engaging with each other. The organization also hosts an annual Blessing of the Fleet, where WE Kayak, along with other members of the community, honor Kayakers who have passed and bless those who regularly go out on the water. This free community initiative has helped engage Grosse Ile residents while providing opportunities for physical recreation.

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Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring WE Kayak on the date of the organization’s second annual Blessing of the Fleet. WE Kayak has helped individuals explore Grosse Ile’s waterways and foster a strong community.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE COALINGA POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Coalanga Police Department, and honor the Ninetieth Anniversary of its founding. In 1927, the Coalaha Police Department was established to serve and protect the City of Coalaha, California, located in the Pleasant Valley of the Western Fresno County, and its 2,900 residents. At the time of its formation, the Department consisted of two officers and operated under Coalaha’s first Police Chief,
Walter Hayes. Since its humble beginnings, both the Police Department and the City of Coalinga have grown exponentially. Today, the Coalinga Police Department has a total of thirty-one sworn officers, a twenty-four hours a day dispatch center, and serves approximately 18,000 citizens.

While the Police Department has grown immensely in the last ninety years, its commitment to public safety has remained constant. The force has continued to provide a safe and peaceful environment in the city through effective and impartial law enforcement. From body camera implementation and advanced investigative techniques to cannabis regulation, the department strives to be on the cutting edge of law enforcement tactics and services. They are also committed to meeting the needs of residents and businesses through active participation and community partnerships. The Coalinga Police Department hosts annual community events including blood drives, animal vaccination clinics, and Christmas toy drives. The Department provides security detail services at Coalinga City and Chamber of Commerce events, such as the Coalinga Horned Toad Derby, an event that has brought visitors to the City for the past eighty years. This strategy encourages a stronger partnership between the community and the Police Department.

Additionally, the Coalinga Police Department prides itself on being the first Police Department in the State of California to have a female Police Chief. Chief Luella “Kay” Holloway was the first female law enforcement executive to be appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown in 1975 to chair the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. In acknowledgement of the contributions made to ensure the safety and betterment of its local residents, the Coalinga Police Department was presented with the Community Service Award from the Coalinga Chamber of Commerce. The Police Department has continued to exemplify extraordinary service to the People of Coalinga over the past nineteen years, and their bravery is worthy of recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the Coalinga Police Department on their Ninetieth Anniversary and wish them another ninety years of success in serving the community.

Catherine Winckler

Hon. Ed Perlmutter
Of Colorado

In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Catherine Winckler for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Catherine Winckler is a student at Warren Tech North and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Catherine Winckler is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Catherine Winckler for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

In honor of the Ninetieth Anniversary and Ninety-sixth birthday of Pastor Erastus and Elect Lady Annie Pearl Godfrey of Alabama

Hon. Mike Rogers
Of Alabama

In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House’s attention to recognize the 48th anniversary of Pastor Erastus Godfrey and his wife, Elect Lady Annie Pearl Godfrey, serving in the ministry. Before his birth, Pastor Godfrey’s mother received a prophetic work to name him Erastus, because she knew he would grow up to preach the gospel.

Pastor Godfrey was called into the ministry in 1969 at the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church. After four years, he was called to be pastor at the Shiloh Baptist Church in Silverur, Alabama, for six years. He then became pastor of Union Baptist Church in Stewartville, Alabama, for 23 years.


He received his biblical education at Shocco Springs in Talladega, Alabama and at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama.

Pastor Godfrey has been married to Elect Lady Annie Pearl Godfrey for over 50 years and is a second-generation minister.

He has three sons, one daughter and a daughter-in-law who have also been called into the ministry. His wife is an inspiration to the church family at New Beginning Ministries.

Their children include: Kenneth Collins, Erastus Herbert Godfrey, Terry Fuller, Etta Taylor, Jeannette Godfrey, DeForest Godfrey and Mary Thompson.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Pastor Erastus and Elect Lady Annie Pearl Godfrey for their 48 years of service in the ministry.
Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action
Routine Proceedings, pages S3615–S3655

Measures Introduced: Seven bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 1380–1386, and S. Res. 195.

Page S3650

Measures Reported:
H.R. 494, to expand the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument in the State of Georgia, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 115–114)

Page S3648

Mandelker Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

Page S3616

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

By 94 yeas to 5 nays (Vote No. 149), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination.

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 12 noon, on Wednesday, June 21, 2017; and that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment and Leader remarks count post-cloture on the nomination.

Page S3620

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 95 yeas to 4 nays (Vote No. EX. 148), Brock Long, of North Carolina, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

Pages S3619–20, S3655

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Anna Maria Farias, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Marvin Kaplan, of Kansas, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2020.

Patrick Pizzella, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor.

Lance Allen Robertson, of Oklahoma, to be Assistant Secretary for Aging, Department of Health and Human Services.

Page S3655

Executive Communications: Pages S3646–48

Executive Reports of Committees: Pages S3648–50

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S3650–51

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S3651–54

Additional Statements: Pages S3644–46

Notices of Intent: Page S3654

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S3625

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—149)

Page S3620

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:39 p.m., until 12 noon on Wednesday, June 21, 2017. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S3654.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: FDA

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Food and Drug Administration, after receiving testimony from Scott Gottlieb, Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

APPROPRIATIONS: FCC

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported 995 nominations in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

NOMINATION

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Patrick M. Shanahan, of Washington, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senator Cantwell, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

THE USF AND RURAL BROADBAND

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet concluded a hearing to examine the Universal Service Fund and rural broadband, after receiving testimony from Michael J. Balhoff, Charlesmead Advisors, LLC, Columbia, Maryland; Shirley Bloomfield, NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association, Arlington, Virginia; Eric B. Graham, C Spire, Ridgeland, Mississippi; and Karen S. Rheuban, University of Virginia Center for Telehealth, Charlottesville.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUDGET

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President’s proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Interior, after receiving testimony from Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior.

REVIEWING CONGRESSIONAL AUMF

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine reviewing Congressional authorizations for the use of military force, after receiving testimony from John B. Bellinger, III, Arnold and Porter Kaye Scholer LLP, and Kathleen H. Hicks, Center for Strategic and International Studies, both of Washington, D.C.

FIRST AMENDMENT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the assault on the First Amendment on college campuses, after receiving testimony from Zachary R. Wood, Uncomfortable Learning, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Frederick M. Lawrence, The Phi Beta Kappa Society, and Fanta Aw, American University, both of Washington, D.C.; Eugene Volokh, University of California School of Law, Los Angeles; J. Richard Cohen, Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery, Alabama; Floyd Abrams, Cahill Gordon and Reindel LLP, New York, New York; and Issac Smith, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 35 public bills, H.R. 2936–2970; and 3 resolutions, H. Res. 393–395 were introduced.

Additional Cosponsors:

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 1551, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–183);

H.R. 2190, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department’s real property portfolio, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–184);

H.R. 2842, to provide for the conduct of demonstration projects to test the effectiveness of subsidized employment for TANF recipients, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–185); and

H. Res. 392, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1873) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1654) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–186).

Page H4991

Recess: The House recessed at 12:09 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. 

Page H4946
Recess: The House recessed at 2:03 p.m. and reconvened at 3:06 p.m.

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017: H.R. 1393, to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States;

Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act: H.R. 2847, to make improvements to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and related provisions, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 391 yeas to 8 nays, Roll No. 309;

Reducing Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act: H.R. 2866, amended, to review and improve licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 382 yeas to 19 nays, Roll No. 310;

Amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities: H.R. 1551, amended, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities;

Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act: H.R. 2742, to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to adopt an electronic system to help expedite the placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption, across State lines, and to provide funding to aid States in developing such a system;

Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act: H.R. 2834, amended, to improve the well-being of, and improve permanency outcomes for, children and families affected by heroin, opioids, and other substance abuse;

Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act: H.R. 2857, amended, to support foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse;

Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017: H.R. 2484, to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict;

Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017: H.R. 2132, amended, to require the implementation of a redress process and review of the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules for aviation security;

Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act of 2017: H.R. 625, amended, to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism;

Department of Homeland Security Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017: H.R. 2283, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to improve morale within the Department of Homeland Security workforce by conferring new responsibilities to the Chief Human Capital Officer, establishing an employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans, and authorizing an annual employee award program; and


Securing our Agriculture and Food Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker’s table and concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 1238, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism.

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H4946.

Senate Referral: S. 782 was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H4978–79, H4979. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Committee Meetings

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Department of Energy. Testimony was heard from Rick Perry, Secretary, Department of Energy.
WATER SUPPLY PERMITTING COORDINATION ACT; ELECTRICITY RELIABILITY AND FOREST PROTECTION ACT

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 1654, the “Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act”; and H.R. 1873, the “Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act”. The Committee granted a structured rule for H.R. 1873. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in Part A of the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. The rule waives all points of order against amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in Part B of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Representatives McClintock and LaMalfa.

Joint Meetings
No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Interior, 9:30 a.m., SD–124.

Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Air Force, 10:30 a.m., SD–192.

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Energy, 2:30 p.m., SD–138.

Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 and 2019 for the Department of Veterans Affairs, 2:30 p.m., SD–124.

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Budget Office, 3 p.m., SD–192.

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 2018 and the Future Years Defense Program, 9 a.m., SR–232A.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of David P. Pekoske, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, to hold an oversight hearing to examine collaborative initiatives, focusing on restoring watersheds and large landscapes across boundaries through state and Federal partnerships, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine the President’s proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 and the trade policy agenda, 10:15 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to receive a closed briefing on preparing for the 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report, 11 a.m., S–116, Capitol.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider the nominations of Russell
Vought, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director, and Neomi Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, both of the Office of Management and Budget, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine cybersecurity regulation harmonization, 10:30 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the MS–13 problem, focusing on investigating gang membership, its nexus to illegal immigration, and Federal efforts to end the threat, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold hearings to examine Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, budget hearing on the Office of Management and Budget, 2 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, budget hearing on the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 3 p.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, markup on H.R. 2810, the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018”, 2:30 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.


Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, hearing entitled “Defining and Mapping Broadband Coverage in America”, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, to continue markup on H.R. 2868, the “National Flood Insurance Policyholder Protection Act of 2017”; H.R. 2874, the “21st Century Flood Reform Act of 2017”; H.R. 1422, the “Flood Insurance Market Parity and Modernization Act”; H.R. 1558, the “Repeatedly Flooded Communities Preparation Act”; H.R. 2246, the “Taxpayer Exposure Mitigation Act of 2017”; H.R. 2565, to require the use of replacement cost value in determining the premium rates for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Act, and for other purposes; and H.R. 2875, the “National Flood Insurance Program Administrative Reform Act of 2017”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled “Grading the Egyptian and Tunisian Enterprise Funds”, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 495, the “Protection of Children Act of 2017”; H.R. 2826, the “Refugee Program Integrity Restoration Act of 2017”; and H.R. 1096, the “Judgment Fund Transparency Act of 2017”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing on legislation to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to provide that extraction of helium from gas produced under a Federal mineral lease shall maintain the lease as if the helium were oil and gas, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs, hearing on H.R. 2662, the “Restoring Accountability in the Indian Health Service Act of 2017”, 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 2842, the “Accelerating Individuals into the Workforce Act”, 3 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment, hearing entitled “Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technologies”, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Partners in Commerce: The Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee”, 11 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Russia Investigation Task Force, hearing entitled “Hearing with Former Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson”, 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Subcommittee on National Security and Cybersecurity, hearing entitled “Ongoing Intelligence Activities: FY 18 Budget Request”, 1:30 p.m., HVC–304.
Next Meeting of the SENATE  
12 noon, Wednesday, June 21

Senate Chamber
Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, post-cloture.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
10 a.m., Wednesday, June 21

House Chamber
Program for Wednesday: Consideration of H.R. 1873—Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of H.R. 1654—Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act (Subject to a Rule).

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