The House met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER
Pastor Dennis Jokela, Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department, Kalamazoo, Michigan, offered the following prayer:

Father God, we are grateful to be able to come into Your presence in a free country such as ours. I ask that You bless this great Nation.

I ask You to pour out Your wisdom and revelation knowledge into everyone hearing the sound of my voice.

I ask You to let Your glory shine like a light emanating from this place, filling our entire country.

I speak unification of our country in our original, can-do, American spirit.

I speak life into those dead and dying places in our land, Lord.

For those places that are in need of Your restoration power, I ask that You pour it out on them.

I ask that You bless these proceedings today and bless the work of our hands.

I ask all of this in Jesus’ mighty name.

Amen.

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

WELCOMING PASTOR DENNIS JOKELA
The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a proud son of Portage, Michigan, Pastor Dennis Jokela of the Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department.

He has been a pillar of our community through his work as a small-business owner, a judge for the Michigan Vocational Education Society, and as a corporal and chaplain at the Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department as well.

I know I speak for many as we thank, in particular, our first responders all across the country, sheriffs, and police officers, and pray to keep them and their families safe.

Pastor Jokela’s dedication to public service runs deep as a seven-time decorated veteran of Vietnam and Cambodia—overdue medals my team was able to help him obtain—a pastor with the Michigan Boot Camp for Troubled Teens at Fort Custer, and his work with the homeless. His commitment to community and country are unquestionable.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Pastor Jokela for his service here and at home. We are all so honored to be with him today. I thank him for his kind words.

RECOGNIZING ERIEZ MANUFACTURING ON 75 YEARS IN BUSINESS
(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Eriez Manufacturing on 75 years in business in Erie, Pennsylvania. Eriez has grown exponentially since the early days when Orange Fowler Merwin—or O.F., as he was known—sold equipment to grain millers.

His customers often complained about stray pieces of metal that found their way into the grain that the farmers brought to the mills for grinding. In 1942, O.F., devised a permanent magnetic separator in the basement of his home and sold it to a grain miller.

Eriez was officially on its way.

Since those humble beginnings in that Erie basement, Eriez has expanded into the world authority in separation technologies with operations all over the world. Of course, it has always been headquartered in Erie and on Asbury Road since 1962.

Mr. Speaker, today, Eriez employs more than 300 Erie residents, between its two locations on Asbury Road and at its facility near Belle Valley.

The story of Eriez Manufacturing truly is a classic American Dream tale, and it has maintained local family ownership throughout its history. I congratulate them on this milestone.

PUERTO RICO NEEDS OUR ASSISTANCE
(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last week, Hurricane Maria hit the island of Puerto Rico. The damage on the island has been described as apocalyptic: buildings destroyed, a major dam at

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.
risk of collapse, and millions of American citizens looking for help. But 1 week later, we still have not addressed this extraordinary crisis. Congress is not planning to vote on providing aid until next week.

President Trump tweeted about Puerto Rico owing money to Wall Street, as if that should be a priority right now. President Trump and my friends on the other side of the aisle who control Congress need to start treating this with the urgency it demands.

My district is home to more than 20,000 Puerto Ricans. Over the last week, they have told me that they don’t understand what is going on in Washington. Why is this taking so long?

This President talks a lot about putting America first, but why isn’t he doing more to help our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico?

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, bring a bill to the floor. Let’s get this done, and let’s address the humanitarian crisis that is besetting citizens in Puerto Rico.

Recognizing the 911 Dispatchers of Harvey

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

Mr. Poe of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in the inky darkness of night, during the hammering rain of Harvey, reservoirs released even more water with little notice to people downstream. Meanwhile, hundreds of first responders battled the incessant rain, rising floodwaters, and raging currents to rescue people from homes.

Inside the dimly lit call center, 911 dispatchers answered call after call after call, racing to keep up as tens of thousands dialed in. Dispatchers like 26-year-old Erika Wells worked 24-hour stretches, then trying to grab a nap or two.

With phones constantly ringing, the dispatchers sent rescue teams to homes packed with people in need of escape, a woman in labor, and families trapped on their roofs. As the 50-inch rain kept pounding and floodwaters rose, the dispatchers answered, calmed, and helped those in need.

As the morning Sun finally broke through the Texas sky, the dispatchers emerged from their stations and finally checked on their own families, many of whom had their own homes flooded. These dispatchers are some of the Texas Proud that helped save others in the floods of summer.

And that is just the way it is.

Recognizing Nestor Garcia

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

Ms. Jackson Lee. Mr. Speaker, at about 2 a.m. this morning, our HPD, Houston Police Department, faced a tragic incident of one of our officers who was participating in a stop along with other officers on I-59 South. Unfortunately, a driver who paid no attention to the flashing lights and the work of these officers sped through and hit Nestor up.

My last word was that he was in surgery, with his family, and that all of those who could be there—the chief and the mayor—were at the hospital with him.

So I simply stand to ask for prayers for Nestor Garcia and his family and indicate that we are well aware of the work of the outstanding police and fire departments during Hurricane Harvey and all of the time. I wish him the best.

So I simply stand to ask for prayers for Nestor Garcia and his family and indicate that we are well aware of the work of the outstanding police and fire departments during Hurricane Harvey and all of the time. I wish him the best.

Mr. Speaker, my constituent, Tanner Lee Jameson, was just 13 when he died from cardiac arrest during a basketball game. His school had an automated external defibrillator, or AED, in a nearby office, but it was inaccessible when Tanner needed it most.

Since Tanner’s passing, his mother, and my constituent, Rhonda Harrill, who is in the gallery today with her husband, has been a passionate advocate for increased AED access.

Early this year, I introduced the AEDs resolution, H. Res. 35, which would encourage schools to have AEDs and to provide annual AED training.

In 1998, I introduced, and Congress passed, the Aviation Medical Assistance Act, the law that requires, among other things, passenger airplanes and airports to have AEDs and flight crews to receive additional first aid and AED training.

Today, I am pleased to participate in this year’s AED Hunt on the Hill, sponsored by my friend, Dr. Phil Roe, and hosted by the Children’s Cardiomyopathy Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to remember Tanner Jameson’s life, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H. Res. 35 to hopefully help save lives in the future.

The Speaker pro tempore. The Chair would remind the gentleman that references to occupants of the gallery are not permitted.

Sickle Cell Awareness

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

Ms. Adams. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a topic very near and dear to my heart: sickle cell anemia.

Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that affects red blood cells and rapidly destroys sickle cells in the body. During an attack, victims can experience acute chest pain, stroke, and damage to vital organs like the kidneys and liver.

This disease is personal to me because one of my nieces has a sickle cell trait, which means she does not suffer from it. She was always in and out of the hospital. Oftentimes, the only resources we had to treat her were our family’s love and support. This was devastating. My sister lost her battle at age 26.

But this doesn’t have to be the story of others. While medical treatment and research for sickle cell anemia has evolved, it is imperative to support Federal funding for additional research and treatment opportunities.

I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 2410, the Sickle Cell Disease Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing Sickle Cell Awareness Day by not only supporting community efforts to treat patients with this disease, but by cosponsoring legislation that provides Federal resources to advance medical treatments for this disease.

FALLEN HERO BANNER DEDICATION

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

Mr. Fitzpatrick. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, I participated in the unveiling of the Bucks County Home-town Heroes Banners at Freedom Square in Doylestown. These banners hold the names and faces of the brave women and men of Bucks County who gave their life in service of our Nation after the terror attacks of September 11 and as part of the global war on terror.

It was a humbling experience to be surrounded by friends and families of those warriors, as well as a community committed to honoring their legacy. Even Freedom Square—a community-built memorial supported by the Travis Manion Foundation, the local chapter of the American Gold Star Mothers, and the Goldman Family—signifies our commitment to remember those who have served and sacrificed for our freedom. As always, I am proud of the patriotism and support shown by our community in Bucks County.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the 23 names of these fallen heroes in honor of their sacrifice, the sacrifice of their families, and in support of the Bucks County community.

Specialist Kristofer T. Stonesifer, U.S. Army.

Corporal Patrick R. Nixon, U.S. Marine Corp.


Captain Brian R. Faunce, U.S. Army.

Specialist Tamarra J. Ramos, U.S. Army.

Specialist Maurice J. Johnson, U.S. Army.

Specialist Edward W. Brabazon, U.S. Army.
I was pleased to see that President Trump has asked Brigadier General Richard Kim to go to the island and seek to lead. Because of the island’s topography and isolation, this isn’t a Houston, this isn’t a New Orleans or a Florida. Rescue and relief isn’t as easy as maneuvering a convoy of power company trucks down the interstate highway. Logistically, this is much more difficult.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time to set up a joint task force, with one person in charge, able to make decisions and not get ‘stuck on stupid,’ as one Army general famously said. That general, Russell Honore, turned around the government floundering after taking charge of Joint Task Force Katrina.

On the ground, the joint task force can coordinate all public and private relief efforts, starting with putting our National Guard to work, reopening the air tower, clearing the roads, and opening a chow hall.

I continue to pray for Puerto Rico, but each of us must understand our beloved island’s crisis is very different.

IN SUPPORT OF DREAMERS AND THE DREAM ACT

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Members, I also want to join my colleagues from Houston in prayers for Hurricane Harvey survivors, especially Luis Garcia and his family, but I rise today in support of the 68,000 DREAMers that are in Houston, Harris County, Texas, and throughout our country, and call on congressional leaders to bring up the Dream Act for immediate vote.

DREAMers and young men and women who were raised in America know no other country and are an integral part of our schools, our colleges, our workforce, and our communities.

During the worst days of Hurricane Harvey, DREAMers helped rescue neighbors and save lives throughout Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast. DREAMers are now and will continue to be serving a key role in rebuilding our city.

President Trump’s announcement this month to end the DACA program was a gut punch to DREAMers who are helping their families and communities recover from Harvey’s destruction. Congress has a moral obligation to honor the hard work and aspirations of the current and earlier generations of immigrants and DREAMers, and bring up the Dream Act for our immediate consideration.

IN SUPPORT OF 800,000 DREAMERS

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

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of 800,000 DREAMers abandoned by this administration. Any doubt about the administration’s senseless cruelty was put to rest on September 5, when they chose to end DACA.

Immigrant youth and their families fuel our economy and help create a more dynamic future.

Terminating DACA is a heartless and vile act that will upend lives, ruin families, and disrupt local economies. DREAMers are the embodiment of America’s promise, the idea that no matter where you come from, the color of your skin, or the God you worship, if you come here, believe in our values, work hard, and contribute to our country, then you deserve a place here in the United States of America. That is what we are fighting for: to keep the promise of this great country.

To my Republican colleagues: you can’t profess to support the DREAMers yet fail to support the Dream Act. It is time to put up or shut up. I call on my colleagues to sign the discharge petition and support a clean Dream Act.
give some degree of clarity, I have, in this hand, an article that is styled, "The Overcriminalization of Impeachment." It is dated August 7, 2017, by Gene Healy. He is with the Cato Institute.

I commend it to all who have any interest in impeachment, because this will give you a summary that will spare you a lot of reading in the Federalist Papers, reading many other articles. I commend it to you, and I will say more about it at a later time.

MUSLIM BAN 3.0

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

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my outrage toward the latest travel ban proposed by the Trump administration again late on September 24. The administration issued a proclamation with new discriminatory travel restrictions on eight countries.

Let me be clear: no matter how many times this administration tries to repackage it and sell it, a Muslim ban is a Muslim ban. It remains hateful, discriminatory, and goes against our American values. We won’t be fooled by the inclusion of North Korea and Venezuela.

This Muslim and refugee ban continues to be part of a dangerous and immoral agenda against a religion, people of color, and immigrants.

This administration and this ban is fanning the flames of fear and anger against groups of Americans and immigrants, with policies that clearly undermine the Constitution that I love and our American principles.

Dressed up or dressed down, this ban must not stand.

We must address terrorism, and it is not restricted to the Muslim population. We must address it here on the ground in homegrown terrorism as well.

PROTECTING AND DEFENDING OUR DREAMERS

(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, I rise today to protect and defend our DREAMers.

Now that President Trump has failed all of us by rescinding DACA, Congress must now move immediately to protect these courageous, patriotic DREAMers like my constituent and aspiring cardiovascular surgeon, Cinthya Moran.

Cinthya just wants an opportunity to contribute to her community, and in her own words: "We are only here to contribute to this amazing country."

Like Cinthya, all DACA recipients are our friends, they are our neighbors, they are soldiers on the battlefield, they are new homeowners, they are entrepreneurs, they are students.

I urge my colleagues to support our DACA constituents and pass legislation that protects these brave young people, and I ask you to do that as soon as possible.

AMERICA’S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM IS BROKEN

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I have been saying for years that the American immigration system is broken, and it is about time we fix it. We must pass comprehensive immigration reform. This will obviously require bipartisan and a deliberative policy process to make it happen.

In the meantime, we ought to do what we can where we can agree to do it, and that is why I am working towards this effort to protect our Dreamers now. This is why I signed the discharge petition to bring to the House floor a bipartisan, bicameral Dream Act which will permanently protect these people who were brought here as children, who are in school, who are serving in our military, who are working and contributing to our economy, that will permanently protect Dreamers and offer them a path to earned citizenship.

At Fresno State University, we have 1,200 DREAMers who are enrolled; at UC Merced, we have 800 DREAMers who are enrolled. We have thousands of young people in the San Joaquin Valley who are impacted, and that is why we must change this law and that is why I am here today, calling on the House leadership to bring the Dream Act to the floor. It is the right thing to do. It is the American way in which we solve problems.

I will continue to do everything in my power to bring the Dream Act to the House floor to vote and to work for a comprehensive and a longer term immigration policy so that we don’t have to continue to have the political posturing and the fight that has ensued way too long. Let’s fix this for the DREAMers now.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK.
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.
Washington, DC, September 27, 2017.
Hon. Paul D. Ryan,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on September 27, 2017:

That the Senate passed S. 1028.

That the Senate passed S. 1028.

That the Senate passed S. 1057.

That the Senate passed S. 870.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3823, DISASTER TAX RELIEF AND AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2017, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 538 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 538

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House, without intervention of any question of consideration, the bill (H.R. 3823) to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorities for the airport and airway trust fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes.

All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against the provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendments thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. It shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of September 28, 2017, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules as though under clause 1 of rule XV. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this section.

Mr. Speaker pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), the ranking member, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?
There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule and the underlying legislation. The rule provides for consideration of H.R. 3823, the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the whole world is aware of a series of storms that have hit not only America’s shores but those shores of so many of our territories, including the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

A series of these hurricanes over the past few weeks has caused great devastation in Texas, Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico, and, of course, again, the U.S. Virgin Islands. These are people who are American citizens, and they are in these territories, and they are suffering from the loss and devastation, and we have never seen an occurrence like this with two storms in succession.

While there remains much to be done and evaluated, this legislation takes important steps. I believe, that are necessary to begin providing relief to those individuals. We have had a lot of debate not only on this floor and not only at the Rules Committee, but certainly in the U.S. House of Representatives and the public media about what steps need to be taken, who needs to be there first, what FEMA’s responsibility is, what the responsibility is for HUD, what the responsibility is for States, and what the responsibility is for citizens and their local communities. But the bottom line is that much of the evaluation, the undertaking of saving of lives, trying to work to save more property and to be there in support of people, is an ongoing project that will take a long period of time.

Specifically, this underlying legislation helps to address five targeted and meaningful tax provisions that provide relief and make it easier for people to recover and return to their homes and to make long-term decisions from a money and tax perspective.

It will allow hurricane victims to keep more of their paychecks, deduct more of the cost of their expensive property damage, and provide more affordable and immediate access to relief measures for all Americans. The language that passed out of the Financial Services Committee 58-0 and that was passed last year, 419-0, has now been placed in this bill, also. We believe it is another example of bipartisan support, not only by the gentleman from the Financial Services Committee, Jeb Hensarling, but also by his ranking member, Maxine Waters, who very carefully, last year, in preparation for our request, they have asked for our help, and I have pledged to do both. But I told them that I believe this House of Representatives would very carefully understand their special request at this time because they are under increased pressure simply to get planes that would land to allow not only the bringing in of emergency supplies, but also taking out people who would need to come ashore, for those that might be children, elderly people, or the sick.

In addition to the tax provisions of H.R. 3823, which addresses some of the hardships of the Flood Insurance Program, we have included important reform pieces that are pro-consumer and increase competition at a very difficult time now that these hurricanes have landed on our shores. This provides options for all Americans.

The language that passed out of the Financial Services Committee 58-0 and that was passed last year, 419-0, has now been placed in this bill, also. We believe it is another example of bipartisan support, not only by the gentleman from the Financial Services Committee, Jeb Hensarling, but also by his ranking member, Maxine Waters, who very carefully, last year, in preparation probably for what would lie ahead in the future, to provide a free market opportunity for more people to receive flood insurance. It is part of this package. It passed here last year. It is another part of what might be an answer maybe only for a few people, but it is an option and an opportunity, and I appreciate Chairmen Hensarling and Maxine Waters for being a part of passing that last year out of the Financial Services Committee 58-0.

This bill also reauthorizes the FAA, the Federal Aviation Administration, for 6 months, their funding levels, which would, I believe, be the most important to all areas of the country. This is a bipartisan bill.

This is an opportunity for people who live in urban areas to note that the FAA, day in and day out, 24 hours a day, is a vital part of the important transportation component of landing planes, bringing people to and from work and back safely. It also is a part of our families who travel the system, and the Federal Aviation Administration, the FAA, needs this money and needs the operational capacity to move forward. It also comes at a critical time when the radar system that is in Puerto Rico has failed, and it is necessary that we provide funding to fund the FAA so that they can get these systems back up and online to increase traffic to meet the needs of the islands and to make sure that this is done safely.

Now is not a time to play games with an essential program, and I believe that this is very important for each of the Members to understand. This is a vital part of this package.

Finally, the underlying legislation expands several other health programs that would be finishing at the end of the year, including the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program and the Special Diabetes Program for Native Americans. The package is focused on health programs that are expiring, and Chairmen Greg Walden from Hood River, Oregon, who is the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, has every intent to make sure that we will end up extending funding for CHIP, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, because we know that it expires soon. The chairman has looked into this and certified back to me that the money that is necessary to keep this program going is not in jeopardy and that he looks forward to a time when he can move CHIP not only to where it is considered on the floor, but to the Rules Committee, where it can be equally and fairly debated.

Before concluding my opening statements, I just want to affirm to the people in my home State of Texas and other areas affected by these disasters that this is the second of a series of responses to these natural disasters. On September 8, this body, the United States House of Representatives, passed initial emergency response legislation, providing $15.3 billion in aid.

To provide some historical context, in 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the United States in August, followed by Hurricanes Rita and Wilma in September and October. The House responded by passing an initial response in September to provide immediate emergency relief; then, after some evaluation, determine the actual needs on the ground, that is, by an analysis that took place, and that is when the House passed a more comprehensive package that included many of the provisions that are in here that we are talking about, but they did that in December.

There was some debate yesterday at the Rules Committee about the timing,
about delay, and I assured the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), who is a distinguished member of our committee, that, while I did not know the exact timing or delay, what might be a delay in that timing, that I believe that is forthcoming; that, as there is a broader evaluation, as time moves on, as we go from saving people, trying to do recovery, to where we then move to the next phases of this opportunity, we will then know more specifically the needs of programs, the work that needs to be done by this Congress, and the help that we can provide to these areas.

I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) not only for his vigorous, what I believe, support of making sure that people—albeit they might be in Florida, but where they were a part of these storms, I felt Mr. HASTINGS' care and concern for them, to make sure that what the House of Representatives was well managed, and I appreciate his feedback.

This body has every intention of providing further relief to our fellow Americans. We also understand that the Federal Government, while it has responsibilities, it does so by working with the States. It is done through FEMA.

I have been personally very pleased not only with the actions of President Trump and this administration, but I want to add that I am proud of the House of Representatives. I believe the leadership that PAUL RYAN has provided not only by being on the ground and looking at these areas, but also staying up to date on a day-to-day basis means that the House is nimble and able to move forward as we need to.

What we are talking about today is targeted tax relief for those in need, ensuring the FAA can continue its functions allowing planes to land in Puerto Rico, and continuing our emergency responses.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, extending the Federal Aviation Administration's authority is traditionally something that gets bipartisan support. That hasn't been the case this time, as we saw on Monday when a prior version of this bill failed on substance, it contained several extraneous provisions, but it didn't include some of the most important priorities that we face.

September 30 is nearly upon us. That is the deadline to reauthorize programs that the American people depend on. That includes things like the Perkins student loan program, which helps low-income students to finance their education.

There are 500,000 students across the country, including nearly 50,000 from New York, relying on it right now, but the Perkins Loan Program isn't anywhere in this bill.

The bill also does nothing to extend the Children's Health Insurance Program created in 1997 with broad bipartisan support. More than 9 million children get their health insurance through this program. Without continued Federal funding, States are going to begin running out of money to take care of some of the most vulnerable kids, and they can't wait until the end of the year for us to act.

Community health centers have also been left out of this bill, and they have told us that they will have problems from day one. If we don't extend their funding, an estimated 9 million people would lose access to healthcare.

These are essential bipartisan programs, Mr. Speaker, and what does it say about the majority's leadership if they are not extended by the deadline? It does not bode well for our ability to fund the government later this year, to raise the debt ceiling, extend the Flood Insurance Reform Act, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

This bill is an incredibly important one. No one in this Chamber or anywhere that I know of in the world wants the FAA program stopped and their employees furloughed or airport projects brought to a halt. We should work together and get it right.

This package, however, has not been negotiated on a bipartisan basis. It didn't go through regular order. Committees have been shut out of the process, and Democrats, who represent half the population in the United States, didn't get a say.

We are all glad to see provisions included here to provide some tax relief for victims of the recent hurricanes. With regular order and a more open process, this could be a more comprehensive package of extenders that provide more tax relief for victims to recover and rebuild. After all, the Democrats did suggest 21 bipartisan tax provisions which were included in previous relief legislation after previous disasters.

But none of those, except five, I think, are included in this bill. That is a shame.

We have said it before. This is, I think, the 44th closed rule this session, and that is just about all the bills we have done. This bill could either have been bipartisan extending the FAA authorization, or a comprehensive package of extenders and the tax relief necessary for hurricane victims to recover and rebuild. The bill before us is neither. I doubt many of us have had time to review the changes that were made last night.

I have been told that a bad process leads to a bad product, and, Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that is what we see with this bill. Another opportunity for bipartisan legislation has been turned into another political fight.

I, respectfully, reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 3440, the Dream Act. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would help thousands of young people who are Americans in every way except on paper.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Are there objections to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SÁNCHEZ).

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, while my colleagues on the other side of the aisle press forward with their partisan gimmicks, 860,000 young people are still holding their breath. With time quickly running out, they are wondering what their futures look like without DACA.

Will they lose their jobs? Will they have to drop out of college after they have already paid tuition? Will they live in fear that ICE will be waiting for them at any corner?

All these fears could be eliminated if Republican leadership allowed a vote on the bicameral, bipartisan Dream Act. Instead of living in fear or losing their job, the Dream Act would allow them to continue working and add $22.7 billion annually to our U.S. GDP. Passing the Dream Act will help our country reach the goal of 3 percent economic growth.

The Dream Act would allow them to continue improving themselves and their education. In the process, they would add $728 billion cumulatively to our economy over a decade, due to an "education bump." The Dream Act would allow current teachers, nurses, soldiers, engineers, high school and college students, and hundreds of thousands of others to continue contributing to our economy and our country. I call on my colleagues to vote "no" on the previous question and, instead, bring the Dream Act forward for a vote. We have the votes, and the urgency of passing the Dream Act is real.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the honorable and distinguished gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), my friend.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, this bill has fundamental problems. Number one, the flood insurance provisions that are in this legislation are provisions that are related to flood insurance. The current program expires on December 9.

Why are we dealing with this one component right now?

I agree that this bill passed the House unanimously previously, but it has fundamental problems advancing in a vacuum outside of the larger reform. And mark my words: this provision is going to result in the insolvent

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Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, the President’s decision to rescind DACA has brought fear to hundreds of thousands of DREAMers and their families. They are DREAMers like Saul Jimenez, who teaches special needs students in Los Angeles, and is just one example of how DREAMers contribute and add value to our country and our communities.

DREAMers are American in every way except for their immigration status. To send DREAMers to a country they have never known would be tragic for them and our Nation, which will lose their contributions. The American people overwhelmingly oppose deporting our DREAMers, and our faith-based community and business leaders are implored Congress to pass the Dream Act. Yet the Republican leadership is ignoring their wishes and refusing to allow us a vote on this bipartisan, bicameral bill.

To my Republican colleagues who say they want to protect our Nation’s DREAMers: If that is true, this is your moment. On the previous question so we can vote on the Dream Act and put our DREAMers on the road to the security and future they have earned in the only country they know, the United States of America. The time to pass the Dream Act is now. Vote “no” on the previous question.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGAN).

Ms. BARRAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because there are nearly a million young men and women known as DREAMers who are depending on Congress to take action to protect them so they are not deported.

DREAMers were brought to this country as children. Many barely remember their birth country. They are our teachers, our nurses, and our doctors. They are our neighbors, our friends, and some of us, like me, they are our family.

They also contribute to our economy. The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce estimates that DREAMers in Los Angeles County alone contribute $5.5 billion annually to California’s economy. Across the country, DREAMers would add billions to GDP over the next decade.

Americans overwhelmingly want Congress to take action, and the vast majority of Members would support legislation to protect DREAMers.

Let’s not wait another moment. Let’s bring the Dream Act to the floor for a vote so that we can protect these young men and women. I urge a “no” vote on the previous question so we can bring the Dream Act to the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I would advise the gentlewoman, my colleague, that I have one more speaker left, so she may run down the time as she chooses.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN).
Chairman WALDEN is interested in looking at it again and gaining information about it to see what sorts of changes, additions, or updates that we choose to do. He intends to do that in and through the committee providing information on a bipartisan basis. I trust not only what GREG WALDEN said, but I also know of his desire to deal effectively in this manner.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for bringing up this important question, and I want to provide a timely answer to her, and I appreciate her very much.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to respond to my friend.

Mr. Speaker, I inquire of the gentleman whether he has the same kind of information about them?

Mr. SESSIONS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to respond to my friend.

I appreciate the information that the gentleman just gave us. We have been told the community health service will be in trouble from day one.

Mr. Speaker, I inquire of the gentleman whether he has the same kind of information about them?

Mr. SESSIONS. Will the gentleman yield?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, responding to the gentleman, I do not, but I will talk to Chairman WALDEN immediately, and I will come and find you during the vote, or as we end here, and I will let you know.

I appreciate, once again, Mr. Speaker, that the gentleman woman is very concerned, as is her committee, about children, women's programs, and she would expect me to respond accordingly, and I will talk to Chairman WALDEN and get back to her with an answer.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, responding to my time, I appreciate that because millions of people use the community health services, and the children, we cannot let them go untouched.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU).

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, it has been 3 weeks since President Trump announced he would be ending DACA; 3 weeks of fear in homes, classrooms, and offices where DREAMers wonder if they still have a future here in the only home they have ever known; 3 weeks for Congress to answer President Trump's request for a bill that will focus on reenacting the law to protect DREAMers.

Here is that bill. Members from both parties have said they want to do something to protect DREAMers. Here is that something. Over 80 percent of the American people who live, work, contribute, and follow the law should stay here. Here is our chance to show we are listening.

We must pass the Dream Act because of people like Jose Antonio Vargas, an immigrant from the Philippines, who never knew he was undocumented until he applied for his learner's permit. But being undocumented didn't stop his pursuit of the American Dream. He worked hard and became a journalist, ultimately winning the Pulitzer Prize for his articles.

Let's act to bring DREAMers like Jose out of the shadows. Let act to encourage more to achieve what he did. Let's right this wrong, stop the cruel end of "DACA" and finally pass the Dream Act today.

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

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is full of provisions that could pass in regular order, and I am afraid of using the FAA reauthorization, running out of time, again, because we don't fly if controllers are not in the air.

The FAA bill contains a lot of important provisions that our constituents are crying out for. Among them, airplane noise, which is ruining communities across the United States. A study of the health impact of that noise is as important as DACA, which we should pass, and I think could pass. And there are other provisions which would pass on regular order.

The FAA reauthorization bill is not the bill I would like. We have had too many near misses by letting these short-term extensions pile up on us. Pass a straight FAA reauthorization bill.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York for her leadership. I thank my fellow Texan on this effort.

I am not on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, but I believe the FAA should have this extension. I do believe I should advocate for the many employees and consumers of aviation needs, that the air traffic controllers should not be privatized. And I understand that this particular bill does not have that provision.

I do take concern with the diminishing of the Medicare Improvement Fund by $50 million and, frankly, I believe that we should move forward on these emergencies, particularly as it relates to hurricane victims or areas.

Let me, however, focus on what is of devastating need in the areas of Hurricane Harvey. I want to make mention of the fact that the U.S. Virgin Islands is included in these tax benefits, and Puerto Rico, agreed to by the Members representing that area.

It is important that people do not have a penalty on their account tax provisions. I hope this can move quickly through the Senate. The employee retention credit for employees: the bill provides a tax credit for 40 percent of wages, up to $6,000 per employee, paid by a disaster-affected employer to an employee from a core disaster area.

Charitable deductions: the bill suspends limitations on charitable contributions.

In our community, there are people who don't have the gap to survive. They are working. Their job is closed down because of Hurricane Harvey. I imagine in other areas they may be receiving charitable moneys. Those who give the charitable contributions need to be helped.

The disaster-related personal casualty losses and the special rule for determining the earned income tax credit is extremely important.

We want more. We are desperate, and we need more, Mr. Speaker. I hope that we will be able to work together to get more for those who are desperate from these hurricanes.

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

Mr. Speaker, out of the good bit of the work that is occurring today has been an active discussion for a long period of time in the Financial Services Committee—JEB HENSARLING from Dallas, Texas, the chairman of that committee.

One of our bright young stars is from Tampa, Florida, and his name is DENNIS Ross. And Mr. Ross has heard the debate going on and came down here. He has been an active part of not only understanding the needs of communities, but, more importantly, how we want to have a longer-term answer to this crisis.
Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Ross).

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, for over 50 years, the only game in town for flood insurance has been the Federal Government through the National Flood Insurance Program. That means that for over 50 years, if you want flood insurance, your best bet is to go to the Federal Government, which, by the way, especially after these two successive storms that have just hit Texas and Florida, is going to be over $30 billion in debt.

If we don’t do something to save the taxpayers of this program that cannot actuarially support itself, we are doing a total disservice to our constituency and to our country. So what is part of the underlying bill that this rule will allow is the Market Parity and Modernization Act that will allow consumers to have a choice between the existing Flood Insurance Program, which is significantly in debt, or to have private flood insurance to mitigate, lessen their risks, their ability to support themselves and their families, to know that they can plan for the future, whether that be attending school or buying a home, or a car, or starting a new business.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, this bill will help all Americans regardless of legal status. Nationally, the cruel inaction of Congress’ inaction to pass the Dream Act. The Dream Act is smart policy that combines American values of compassion and humanity with what is best for our economy and our society. This bill will protect 1.5 million undocumented Americans from deportation.

Every day that we fail to act is another day that 800,000 DACAmented young people live with an unshakable fear that they will lose their ability to live without fear of deportation, be able to support themselves and their families, to know that they can plan for the future, whether that be attending school or buying a home, or a car, or starting a new business.

Mr. Speaker, this is about more than economics. It is about human lives, and I urge my colleagues to do what is right. Pass the Dream Act. Let’s help these people.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Tampa, Ms. JAYAPAL.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say in the strongest possible terms that this body must do what the majority of the American people want and pass the Dream Act. The Dream Act is smart policy that combines American values of compassion and humanity with what is best for our economy and our society. This bill will protect 1.5 million undocumented Americans from deportation.

Every day that we fail to act is another day that 800,000 DACAmented young people live with an unshakable fear that they will lose their ability to live without fear of deportation, be able to support themselves and their families, to know that they can plan for the future, whether that be attending school or buying a home, or a car, or starting a new business.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, this bill will help all Americans regardless of legal status. Nationally, the cruel end of this program will cost $460 billion in GDP over the next 10 years; whereas passing the Dream Act would actually bring $22 billion in income to our country every year.

Mr. Speaker, this is about more than economics. It is about human lives, and I urge my colleagues to do what is right. Pass the Dream Act. Let’s help these people.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield my time.

Mr. ROSS, coming to talk to us today.

Mr. Speaker, this is a country that was built on dreams. Our country was founded to protect not the right to a liberty but also to pursuit of happiness.

Sadly, the dreams of the thousands of young DREAMers who were brought here as children have been put on hold by President Trump’s decision to end the DACA program and Congress’ inaction to pass the Dream Act. These young DREAMers have created a life for themselves here in the U.S., and many know no other home other than the U.S.

Today, I want to tell you about one special DREAMer from my district.

Jose is an extremely intelligent young man. He works 6 days a week and still finds time to volunteer in his community. His parents, unfortunately, did not tell him that he was undocumented. In an effort to protect him. He didn’t find out about his status until it was time to apply for college. He was extremely upset, but he didn’t give up. His dream is to go to college and study business. He has so much to contribute to our country.

These young people have become part of the American quilt, a quilt that reflects the diversity of our history, our
culture, and heritage of this great country. We can’t just throw them and toss them out of our Nation.

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

They say that success has many fathers, and they say to thank every success. Success is, many times, in the eye of the beholder. But when lots of people see it, they can get better prepared, and then people see that as a model. I would like to take just a minute, if I can, to talk about a model of success that I use. Back home, I have an opportunity to meet with a number of subject matter experts on issues and ideas. One of them is a man named Bill Dewey. Bill Dewey is an air traffic controller at DFW Airport in Dallas, Texas. Mr. Dewey and I take time to sit down and understand the intricacies of his job, the FAA air traffic controller—safety, planes.

DFW is home to American Airlines. Mr. Dewey handles traffic that goes to Dallas Love Field, home for Southwest Airlines.

What Mr. Dewey has done with me is given me, from a working professional relationship that he has as not only a former member of the United States military as an air traffic controller but real live in the tower at DFW Airport, day after day, seeing how important the FAA is.

We should remember, Mr. Speaker, that it is not just money and time that we ask our employees. We are pasting the employees of these agencies. The FAA has so many dedicated employees—just like Bill Dewey, my dear friend, who is at DFW Airport. This also is a support for those employees to let them know that we are going to fund their programs and we are going to take care of them. So we should, at the same time, we do that, say “thank you” to the men and women who are there 24 hours around the clock to provide safety.

We are in a number of fears where we have not had a plane crash with a fatality, and we are lucky. Part of it goes to the safety of the system at the FAA.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGLO).

Mr. GALLEGLO. Mr. Speaker, President Trump’s decision to end DACA was about callous and cruel acts of his Presidency so far—and that is saying something.

Mr. Speaker, ending the DACA program means betraying our Nation’s promise to protect 800,000 young people who are in America right now and American in every way except on paper, including many thousands who have served in the military. It means exposing them to deportation from the only home they have ever known and robbing our Nation of their exceptional talent, work ethic, and patriotism. We cannot allow this President to play politics with so many young lives. Congress must pass the Dream Act now and as soon as possible to protect these outstanding young people, offer them the chance to become citizens, and empower them to give back to the country they know and love. Vote “no” on the previous question so that we can end this Republican obstructionism and bring this critical bill to the floor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are, once again, reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities to weaken the President of the United States.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, what a shock it is to see the President attacked when he is the one who is going to make sure, by challenging Congress, that we get this issue done.

Mr. Speaker, there was a question the gentlewoman, my dear colleague, Ms. SLAUGHTER, asked. The question is timely and important, and I would like to respond back to her. She asked about the health center program, and the answer I have gotten back from the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. WALDEN, the gentleman from Hood River, Oregon, who is a phenomenal leader to this conference, is that it will not have to access mandatory appropriations until early December, and that Chairman WALDEN understands and appreciates that the gentleman, the ranking member of the Rules Committee, Ms. SLAUGHTER, has asked a question, and he thanks you for asking that. He understands that we do have a timing issue and is preparing quickly to address this concern, and we are going to take care of that up at this time.

I want to thank Chairman WALDEN for that message.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for giving me that answer, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, this is our 44th closed rule for this Congress which prevents Members from offering amendments to the floor. This has put Congress well on its way to becoming the most closed Congress in modern history. Democrats have been routinely unable to do the job we were elected to do and amend bills to represent the concerns of the people of the United States which we are both privileged and obligated to serve.

Despite his promises, Speaker RYAN has shown a disregard for regular order since assuming the gavel. Bills routinely come before the Rules Committee that haven’t even been considered by the relevant committees. The majority even moved a healthcare repeal bill earlier this year without a score from the nonpartisan experts at the Congressional Budget Office.

This measure would impact one-sixth of our Nation’s economy and tens of millions of people if it became law. This is no way to run the people’s House. The public expects more, and it is high time that we heed those calls.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a “no” vote on the previous question, the rule, and the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I would like to continue not only for this long week that we have had at the Rules Committee, but I also want to thank her other members, the gentleman from Worcester, Massachussetts (Mr. McGovern), and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Hastings), for not only their vigorous debate and conversations that we have had, but actually trying to prepare us at the Rules Committee for that which we believe would lie ahead.

Today, you heard the gentlewoman ask about several important issues. Part of our job is to kind of pitch and catch, and that is to catch the things that come our way. But she is using her vision to look ahead, and I admire that. I do owe her answers, and her round and experience would tell her, let’s get moving on these things if we are going to get them done. I hope that I have provided her with feedback from the gentleman, Mr. WALDEN, saying exactly that.

As the hurricane was still over Houston, Texas, dumping 50 inches of rain, I received a conference call from a number of people in Houston as they were preparing to reestablish not only their own communities in Houston, but also the livelihood of the business community, and to be prepared.

I got a conference call from a group of gentlemen, Mr. Tom SIngletary, Mr. Kevin Hedges, Mr. Steve Kesling, Mr. Wallace B. Livesay, and Mr. Steve Raben from Houston. They called me and said: We need, as quickly as we can, to get information about taxes, about people pulling money out of their IRAs, and what the rules and regulations would be.

Mr. Speaker, part of my job is to respond to people, to listen to them, and to listen to their needs. I will tell you that the Houston delegation, on a bipartisan basis, up and down the coast, going down to Blake Farenthold in Corpus Christi, all the way up to Garret Graves who is in Louisiana, felt the fury of Mother Nature. But it didn’t mean that it had to divide us or to defeat us. We have seen nothing but resolve that has come from not only those in Texas but also those in Florida, our two colleagues, Jennifer Gonzalez who is located in Puerto Rico, and Stacey Plaskett who is a fine young Delegate out of the Virgin Islands. They have asked for help. They have asked for the things that would be necessary.

But our ability to effectively listen and turn around in the form of legislation, our ability to be able to schedule meetings and, on a bipartisan basis, be able to talk and sometimes agree but to get our work done is an amazing part of this experiment that we are engaged in.
I, myself, Mr. Speaker, want to thank you for not only your hard work of being here today but being a part of this process. As all of us work together, we can make this process work and give confidence to the American people. That confidence is expressed with what we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying bill.

The material previously referred to by Ms. Slaughter is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO THE RULE OFFERED BY
Ms. Slaughter

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3440) to authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of status of certain individuals who are long-term United States residents and who entered the United States as children or for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate on the bill shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of the five-minute rule the amendment the Speaker shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments thereto as may be agreed to by a two-thirds vote on the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield the time for the purpose of offering an amendment.

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled Amendment of Rules, subsection 2(a) provides: "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal of the House to sustain the demand of recognition of the member leading the opposition to ordering the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer a substantive amendment to the rule, or yield the time for the purpose of offering an amendment."

Mr. Sessions. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to order the previous question. The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.
(a) prohibit the ability of a member to publish or distribute a covered investment fund research report solely because the member is also participating in a registered offering or other distribution of any of the securities of such covered investment fund; or

(b) prohibit the ability of a member to participate in a registered offering or other distribution of a covered investment fund solely because the member has published or distributed a covered investment fund research report about such covered investment fund or its securities; and

(4) provide that a covered investment fund research report shall not be subject to section 24(b) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a–24(b)) or the rules and regulations thereunder, except that such report may be subject to such section and the rules and regulations thereunder to the extent that it is otherwise not subject to the content standards in the rules of any self-regulatory organization related to research reports, including those contained in the rules governing communications with the public regarding investment companies or substantially similar standards.

(c) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as in any way limiting—

(1) the applicability of the antifraud or antimanipulation provisions of the Federal securities laws and rules and regulations thereunder that concern only covered investment funds that fall within the scope of section 24(b) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a–24(b)) or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78j), except that such term shall not include extraneous material on the bill.

(2) the authority of any self-regulatory organization to examine or supervise a member's and any governmental authority's examination with respect to the member's publication or distribution of a covered investment fund research report for compliance with applicable provisions of the Federal securities laws or self-regulatory organization rules related to research reports, including those contained in the rules governing communications with the public, or to require the filing of communications with the public the purpose of which is not to provide research and analysis of covered investment funds.

(d) INTERIM EFFECTIVENESS OF SAFE HARBOR.—

(1) In General.—From and after the 270th day preceding the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission has adopted revisions to section 230.139(b)(5) of title 17, Code of Federal Regulations, as required by subsection (b)(2) of section 24(b) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a–24(b)), and sections 9 and 10 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78d, 78j); or

(2) the authority of any self-regulatory organization to examine or supervise a member's publication or distribution of a covered investment fund research report for compliance with applicable provisions of the Federal securities laws or self-regulatory organization rules related to research reports, including those contained in rules governing communications with the public, or to require the filing of communications with the public the purpose of which is not to provide research and analysis of covered investment funds.

(e) EXCEPTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as in any way limiting—

(1) the applicability of the antifraud or antimanipulation provisions of the Federal securities laws and rules and regulations thereunder, except that such report may be subject to such section and the rules and regulations thereunder to the extent that it is otherwise not subject to the content standards in the rules of any self-regulatory organization related to research reports, including those contained in rules governing communications with the public regarding investment companies or substantially similar standards.

(c) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as in any way limiting—

(1) the applicability of the antifraud or antimanipulation provisions of the Federal securities laws and rules and regulations thereunder, except that such report may be subject to such section and the rules and regulations thereunder to the extent that it is otherwise not subject to the content standards in the rules of any self-regulatory organization related to research reports, including those contained in rules governing communications with the public regarding investment companies or substantially similar standards.

(c) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as in any way limiting—

(1) the applicability of the antifraud or antimanipulation provisions of the Federal securities laws and rules and regulations thereunder, except that such report may be subject to such section and the rules and regulations thereunder to the extent that it is otherwise not subject to the content standards in the rules of any self-regulatory organization related to research reports, including those contained in rules governing communications with the public regarding investment companies or substantially similar standards.

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(1) the applicability of the antifraud or antimanipulation provisions of the Federal securities laws and rules and regulations thereunder, except that such report may be subject to such section and the rules and regulations thereunder to the extent that it is otherwise not subject to the content standards in the rules of any self-regulatory organization related to research reports, including those contained in rules governing communications with the public regarding investment companies or substantially similar standards.

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(1) the applicability of the antifraud or antimanipulation provisions of the Federal securities laws and rules and regulations thereunder, except that such report may be subject to such section and the rules and regulations thereunder to the extent that it is otherwise not subject to the content standards in the rules of any self-regulatory organization related to research reports, including those contained in rules governing communications with the public regarding investment companies or substantially similar standards.

(c) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as in any way limiting—

(1) the applicability of the antifraud or antimanipulation provisions of the Federal securities laws and rules and regulations thereunder, except that such report may be subject to such section and the rules and regulations thereunder to the extent that it is otherwise not subject to the content standards in the rules of any self-regulatory organization related to research reports, including those contained in rules governing communications with the public regarding investment companies or substantially similar standards.

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publish research on ETFs. This is due to anomalies in our securities laws and regulations. S. 327 tackles those anomalies.

Given the importance of ETFs to investors, and particularly retail investors, states to facilitate research on exchange-traded funds.

The Fair Access to Investment Research Act is simple. It directs the SEC to provide a safe harbor for research reports that cover ETFs so that these reports are not considered offers under section 5 of the Securities Act of 1933. This allows ETF research to be issued just like stock research on a corporate issuer.

This commonsense proposal, which mirrors other research safe harbors implemented by the SEC, would clarify the law and allow broker-dealers to publish exchange-traded fund research, thereby allowing investors to access that very useful and needed information in this rapidly growing and occasionally complex market of choices.

This bill also holds the SEC accountable to follow Congress' direction. The bill requires the SEC to finalize the rules within 270 days, and if the deadline is not met, an interim safe harbor rule will take effect until the SEC's rule is finalized.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is not unfamiliar to the Commission, as this provision is already contained in our bill, H.R. 910, earlier this Congress assembled.

Having worked in the banking and investment industry for the past three decades, I appreciate Chairman HENSARLING and the Congress' efforts to promote capital formation, reduce unnecessary burdens, and grow jobs and the economy. S. 327 is another step in that process.

I also want to thank my friend, Mr. FOSTER of Illinois, for working on this legislation, and our colleague in the Senate, Senator HELLER of Nevada, for working with me on this bipartisan, commonsense fix that we worked on together for over 2 years.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for his years of bipartisan work that went into this bill.

I am proud to support this bill today because I believe that it will strengthen the ability of investors to make informed decisions. Exchange-traded funds are large pools of capital and are diversified. They are valuable and popular tools for investors to diversify risks and return through a single security at low cost. This bill will help investors understand the various ETF choices on the market.

I was proud that the House passed our bill, H.R. 910, earlier this Congress by a vote of 405-2. This bill is essentially the same bill and incorporates, among other things, an amendment by Senator ELIZABETH WARREN to reiterate that the safe harbor will not be available to affiliates of the ETF, including the fund's registered investment adviser, if the ETF is a fund that falls within the definition of a "passive" ETF as defined by the SEC.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments, and I do appreciate the work in the Senate that improved this bill. I think it is important to note that this will make this research flow, and in no way will it, I think, confuse investors; in fact, it enhances their investment.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I, again, thank my colleague from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for working with us on this bill over the past years and look forward to it now being sent to the President's desk and signed into law.

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

Mr. HILL. 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 Arkansas (Mr. HILL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 327.

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.

EXTENSION OF REDACTION AUTHORITY CONCERNING SENSITIVE SECURITY INFORMATION

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3229) to protect the safety of judges by extending the authority of the Judicial Conference to redact sensitive personal information contained in their financial disclosure reports and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3229

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF REDACTION AUTHORITY CONCERNING SENSITIVE SECURITY INFORMATION.

Section 105b(3)(E) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended by striking "2017" both places it appears and inserting "2027".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. Issa) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. Jeffries) each will control 20 minutes.
the principle of liberty and justice for all, and fundamental to the principle of equal protection under the law. Unfortunately, in this country, there are some who seek to compromise the integrity of the judicial branch through threats, harassment.

According to the U.S. Marshals Service, in the fiscal year 2017, there has been an increase in every major recorded statistical category regarding the targeting of members of the Federal bench and judiciary employees. Failure to extend this redaction authority will create grave security risks to judges, judiciary employees, and their families.

Each year, only a very small percentage of the financial disclosure reports filed contain an approved redaction of information. Redaction only occurs if there is a clear nexus between a security risk and the information for which redaction is sought.

Federal judges and other employees of the judicial branch routinely interact with disgruntled litigants or dangerous defendants and others who may seek to do them harm.

For example, in 2016, a disgruntled defendant was convicted of a diabolical plot to kidnap, torture, and murder U.S. District Judge Andrew J. Guilford, who presided over that defendant's wire fraud conviction.

In March of this year, the FBI reported that U.S. District Judge Derek Watson, who issued a temporary restraining order against the President's travel ban, has subsequently been the target of repeated violent threats.

In April, Jason Springer, an ISIS sympathizer, was indicted on a charge of threatening to murder U.S. District Judge Elizabeth Kovachevich by flying an explosive drone into her window.

The need to extend the redaction authority is a time-sensitive security matter, and I thank Chairman Goodlatte, Ranking Member Conyers, Subcommittee Chairman Issa, and Ranking Member Nadler of the subcommittee, for their leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. Nadler), the distinguished ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet.

Mr. Nadler. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Nadler is in strong support of H.R. 3229, which would extend an important tool in protecting the safety of judges and their families.

Each year, Federal judges and certain other judicial employees are required to file financial disclosure reports which are made available to the public. These reports serve a vital function in promoting transparency, particularly of any potential conflicts of interest.

By their nature, however, they also disclose sensitive personal information like a home address or family member's place of business. In the hands of a disgruntled member of the public seeking retribution or of an otherwise disturbed individual, this information could put judges and their families at great risk.

Under current law, the Judicial Conference may redact information from a financial disclosure form if publishing such information could endanger the safety of the filer or a member of the filer's family. Unless Congress acts, this redaction authority will expire on December 31 of this year. This commonsense bill simply extends the redaction authority for 10 years.

Unfortunately, many Federal judges face threats to their safety merely for doing their jobs, and according to the Judicial Conference, the number of threats against them are increasing. For example, an Ohio man recently pleaded guilty to arranging a murder-for-hire plot against a judge; an alleged ISIS sympathizer who was attempting to learn a judge's address was indicted a few months ago for threatening the judge; and last year, a California man, who was already in prison, was convicted of plotting to have the Federal judge, prosecutors, and FBI agents killed as revenge.

Sadly, earlier this year, we also saw threats against several judges who ruled against President Trump's Muslim ban. After the President himself launched a verbal assault against the judges and against the Federal judiciary more generally, the judges faced a cascade of online threats and they required heightened security measures. Even without such irresponsible and dangerous behavior by the President, Federal judges regularly face threats, and this legislation is an important tool in protecting their safety.

Although disclosure forms should only be redacted in the most extreme and limited circumstances, the Judicial Conference has used its redaction authority sparingly and wisely, and it should continue to have this authority available to it when circumstances warrant its use.

I appreciate Mr. Jeffries' leadership in introducing this legislation. I want to recognize Ranking Member Conyers for the work he has done to champion this issue over the years as well. I thank Chairman Goodlatte and Mr. Issa for moving this bipartisan bill forward.

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

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

Mr. Conyers. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3229, a bipartisan, commonsense measure intended to protect the safety of federal judges and judicial employees.

The bill accomplishes this critical goal by extending the authority of the Judicial Conference to redact sensitive information contained in the financial disclosure reports filed by these individuals pursuant to the Ethics in Government Act of 1978. Specifically, H.R. 3229 would extend this authority for 10 years, that is, until December 31, 2027.

I am an original cosponsor and strong supporter of this bill for several reasons.

To begin with, absent a fear of retribution, the Judicial Conference's ability to redact sensitive personal information from the financial disclosure statements filed by judges and judicial employees would cease
ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:
Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 538; Adoption of House Resolution 538, if ordered; and to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes, and for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 223, nays 187, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 538]
Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted “Nay” on rollcall No. 538.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Speaker pro tempore announced that for 50 years the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has worked toward stability, prosperity, and peace in Southeast Asia.

The Speaker pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the resolution. The Speaker pro tempore announced that for 50 years the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has worked toward stability, prosperity, and peace in Southeast Asia, as amended.

The Speaker pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 311) recognizing that for 50 years the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has worked toward stability, prosperity, and peace in Southeast Asia, as amended.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to incorporate the statement of the gentleman from California as an amendment to the resolution.

The Speaker pro tempore. Without objection, the amendment is agreed to.
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

H7553

September 27, 2017

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

DISASTER TAX RELIEF AND AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2017

Mr. CURBelo of Florida. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 538, I call up the bill (H.R. 3823) to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes, and asks for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk reads the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 538, the amendment printed in House Report 115-333 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

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

H.R. 3823

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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

TITLe I—FEDERAL AVIATION PROGRAMS

Sec. 101. Extension of airport improvement program.

Sec. 102. Extension of expiring authorities.

Sec. 103. Federal Aviation Administration operations.

Sec. 104. Small community air service.

Sec. 105. Air navigation facilities and equipment.

Sec. 106. Research, engineering, and development.

Sec. 107. Funding for aviation programs.

TITLe II—AVIATION REVENUE PROVISIONS

Sec. 201. Expenditure authority from Airport and Airway Trust Fund.


Sec. 203. Extension of certain health programs.

Personal Explanation

Mrs. BROSKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for votes on 9/27/17 because I was in Indiana with the President of the United States on an official visit. Had I been present, I would have voted “Yea” on rollcall No. 538, “Yea” on rollcall No. 539, and “Yea” on rollcall No. 540.

Mrs. WALORSKI of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for votes on 9/27/17 because I was in Indiana with the President of the United States on an official visit.

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: “A bill reaffirming the 40 years of relations between the United States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the shared pursuit of economic growth and regional security in Southeast Asia.”.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 540 (motion to suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 311), I did not cast my vote. Had I been present, I would have voted “Yea” on this vote.

Mr. HUDDSON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed a vote. Had I been present, I would have voted “Yea” on rollcall No. 540.
Section 301. Extension of airport improvement program.

(a) Authorization of Appropriations.—

(1) in general.—Section 48100(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking the period at the end and inserting “and $1,670,410,959 for the period beginning on October 1, 2017, and ending on March 31, 2018.”

(2) Obligation of amounts.—Subject to limitations specified in advance in appropriations Acts, sums made available pursuant to the amendment made by paragraph (1) may be obligated at any time through September 30, 2018, and shall remain available until expended.

(b) Project Grant Authority.—Section 47114(c) of title 49, United States Code, is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking “September 30, 2017,” and in section 47107(r)(3) of title 49, United States Code, is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking “September 30, 2017,” and inserting “March 31, 2018,” after “fiscal years 2017 through 2018.”

(c) Section 4083(b) of such Code is amended by striking “October 1, 2017” and inserting “March 31, 2018.”

(d) In section 4084(b) of such Code, is amended by adding at the end “after fiscal years 2012 through 2017.”

(e) Section 4085(b) of such Code is amended by striking “October 1, 2017” and inserting “March 31, 2018.”

(f) Section 4086(b) of such Code is amended by striking “October 1, 2017” and inserting “March 31, 2018.”

Section 102. Extension of expiring authorities.

(a) Section 47107(c)(3) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking “October 1, 2017, and ending on March 31, 2018,” and inserting “and, $60,000,000”.

(b) Section 47114(c)(1)(F) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the subparagraph heading by striking “for fiscal year 2017” and inserting “for fiscal year 2017 and 2018”; and

(2) in the matter preceding clause (i) by striking “for fiscal year 2017” and inserting “for fiscal years 2017 and 2018”.

(c) Section 47115(j) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by inserting “and $60,000,000” in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking “September 30, 2017,” and inserting “March 31, 2018,” after “fiscal years 2012 through 2017.”

(d) Section 47124(b)(3)(E) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by inserting “and not more than $5,160,822” in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking “September 30, 2017,” and inserting “March 31, 2018,” after “fiscal years 2012 through 2017.”

(e) Section 47117(b) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by inserting “and $60,000,000” in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking “September 30, 2017,” and inserting “March 31, 2018,” after “fiscal years 2012 through 2017.”

(f) Section 47117(f)(2) of such Code is amended by striking “September 30, 2017,” and inserting “March 31, 2018,” after “fiscal years 2012 through 2017.”

(g) Section 48101(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) $1,623,589,041 for the period beginning on October 1, 2017, and ending on March 31, 2018.”

Section 105. Air navigation facilities and equipment.

Section 48101(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) $1,423,589,041 for the period beginning on October 1, 2017, and ending on March 31, 2018.”

Section 106. Research, engineering, and development.

Section 48102(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (8) by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (9) by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(i) $88,608,219 for the period beginning on October 1, 2017, and ending on March 31, 2018.”

Section 107. Funding for aviation programs.

(a) in general.—Section 48114 of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2) by striking “2017” and inserting “2018”; and

(2) in subsection (c)(2) by striking “2017” and inserting “2018”.

(b) Compliance with funding requirements.—The budget authority authorized in this title, including the amendments made by this section, is subject to the requirements of subsections (a)(1)(B) and (a)(2) of section 48114 of title 49, United States Code, for the period beginning on October 1, 2017, and ending on March 31, 2018.

Title II—Aviation revenue provisions

Sec. 201. Expenditure authority from air-port and airway trust fund.

(a) in general.—Section 9502(d)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by striking “the measure of taxable receipts from each such fund shall be determined for each period ending September 30, 2017,” and inserting “the measure of taxable receipts from each such fund shall be determined for each period ending April 1, 2018;” and

(2) by inserting “the immediately preceding sentence” before the period at the end of (4).

(b) in paragraph (4) by inserting “the immediately preceding sentence” before the period at the end of (4).

Sec. 202. Extension of taxes funding air-port and airway trust fund.


(b) Ticket taxes.—


(2) Property.—Section 42101(k)(1)(A)(i) of such section is amended by striking “September 30, 2017,” and inserting “March 31, 2018.”

(c) Fractional ownership programs.—

(1) Treatment as noncommercial aviation.—Section 4213(b) of such Code is amended by striking “October 1, 2017,” and inserting “April 1, 2018.”

(d) Exemption from ticket taxes.—Section 4213(j) of such Code is amended by striking “September 30, 2017,” and inserting “March 31, 2018.”

Title III—Expiring health provisions

Sec. 301. Extension of certain public health programs.

(a) Extension of program of payments to teaching health centers that operate graduate medical education programs.—Section 360H of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 256b) is amended—

(1) by striking “and $60,000,000” and inserting “and $60,000,000”;

(2) by inserting “and $15,000,000” in the matter preceding paragraph (2) for the first quarter of fiscal year 2018 before the period at the end;

(b) Extension of special diabetes program for Indians.—Section 330S(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c-3) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) $37,500,000 for the first quarter of fiscal year 2018.”

(c) Technical corrections.—Part D of the Public Health Service Act is amended by redesignating—

(1) the second subpart XI (42 U.S.C. 256i; relating to a community-based collaborative care networks program) as subpart XII; and

(2) the second section 340H (42 U.S.C. 256i) as section 340I.

Sec. 302. Extension of Medicare patient IVIG access demonstration project.

(a) Program.—Section 10(b) of the Medicare Access and Strengthening Healthcare System Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 1395t note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting after “for a period of 3 years” the following: “subject to the availability of funds under subsection (g);” and

(2) by striking “and” at the end of subsection (e) and inserting “and.”
"(A) if the date of enactment of the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 is on or before September 30, 2017, for the period beginning on October 1, 2017, and ending on December 31, 2020.

"(B) if the date of enactment of such Act is after September 30, 2017, for the period beginning on the date of enactment of the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 and ending on December 31, 2020, without submission of another application.

SEC. 303. FUNDS FROM THE MEDICARE IMPROVE
MENT FUND.

Section 1896k(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(b)(1)) is amended by striking "during and after fiscal year 2021, $270,000,000" and inserting "during and after fiscal year 2021, $220,000,000".

TITLE IV—DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE MARKET

SEC. 401. PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE.

(a) FLOOD INSURANCE MANDATORY PURCHASE REQUIREMENT.

(1) AMOUNT AND TERM OF COVERAGE.—Section 102 of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a) is amended by striking "Sec. 102. (a)" and all that follows through the end of subsection (a) and inserting the following:

"SEC. 102. (a) AMOUNT AND TERM OF COVERAGE.—Section 102 of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a) is amended by striking "Sec. 102. (a)" and all that follows through the end of subsection (a) and inserting the following:

"(1) REGULATED LENDING INSTITUTIONS.—Each Federal agency lender may implement requirements relating to the financial strength issued pursuant to paragraph (4).

"(2) FEDERAL AGENCY LENDERS AND MORTGAGE INSURANCE AND GUARANTEE AGENCIES.—(A) FEDERAL AGENCY LENDERS.—A Federal agency lender, at its discretion, may increase, extend, or renew any loan secured by improved real estate or a mobile home located or to be located in an area that has been identified by the Administrator as an area having special flood hazards and in which flood insurance has been made available under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, unless the building or mobile home and any personal property securing such loan is covered for the term of the loan by flood insurance:

"(I) the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the Administrator of the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation shall implement requirements relating to the financial strength issued pursuant to paragraph (4).

"(B) OTHER FEDERAL MORTGAGE ENTITIES.—(1) REQUIREMENTS REGARDING MORTGAGE INSURANCE.

"(I) the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the Administrator of the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation shall implement requirements relating to the financial strength issued pursuant to paragraph (4).

"(2) REQUIREMENTS REGARDING MORTGAGE INSURANCE AND GUARANTEE AGENCIES.

"(I) the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the Administrator of the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation shall implement requirements relating to the financial strength issued pursuant to paragraph (4).

"(II) if the flood insurance coverage meets the requirements relating to the financial strength issued pursuant to paragraph (4).

"(3) GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED ENTERPRISES FOR HOUSING.—The Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation shall implement procedures reasonably designed to ensure that, for any loan that is secured by improved real estate or a mobile home located in an area that has been identified, at the time of the origination of the loan or at any time during the term of the loan, by the Administrator as an area having special flood hazards and in which flood insurance is available under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, and

"(B) purchased or guaranteed by such entity, the building or mobile home and any personal property securing the loan is covered for the term of the loan by flood insurance:

"(A) EXISTING COVERAGE.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), paragraph (1) shall apply on the date of enactment of the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 1994.

"(B) NEW COVERAGE.—Paragraphs (2) and (3) shall apply only with respect to any loan made, increased, extended, or renewed after the expiration of the 1-year period beginning on the date of enactment of the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994.

"(C) CONTINUED EFFECT OF REGULATIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this subparagraph, the regulations to carry out paragraph (1), as in effect immediately before the date of enactment of the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994, shall continue to apply until the regulations issued to carry out paragraph (1) as amended by section 522(a) of such Act take effect.

"(D) TERMINATION OF REGULATIONS.—Except as otherwise specified, any reference to flood insurance in this section shall be considered
to include Federal flood insurance and private flood insurance. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to supersede or limit the authority of a Federal entity for lending regulation, the Federal Housing Finance Agency, a Federal agency lender, a covered Federal mortgage entity (as such term is defined in paragraph (2)(B)(i)), the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation to establish requirements relating to the financial strength of private insurance companies to ensure that the entity or agency will accept private flood insurance, provided that such requirements shall not affect or conflict with any State law, regulation, or process tolling the regulation of the business of insurance."

(D) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

"(8) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(A) FLOOD INSURANCE.—The term ‘flood insurance’ means—

(i) Federal flood insurance; and

(ii) private flood insurance.

"(B) FEDERAL FLOOD INSURANCE.—The term ‘federal flood insurance’ means an insurance policy made available under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.).

"(C) PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE.—The term ‘private flood insurance’ means an insurance policy that—

(i) is issued by an insurance company that is—

(I) licensed, admitted, or otherwise approved to engage in the business of insurance in the State in which the insured building is located, by the insurance regulator of that State; or

(II) eligible as a nonadmitted insurer to provide insurance in the home State of the insured, in accordance with sections 521 through 527 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (15 U.S.C. 8201 through 8206); or

(ii) is issued by an insurance company that is not otherwise disapproved as a surplus lines insurer by the insurance regulator of the State in which the property to be insured is located; and

(iii) provides flood insurance coverage that complies with the laws and regulations of that State.

(D) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

(E) FEDERAL FLOOD INSURANCE COVERAGE CONTINUOUS COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS.—Section 1308 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(8) EFFECT OF PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE COVERAGE CONTINUOUS COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS.—For purposes of any statutory, regulatory, or administrative continuous coverage requirement, including under section 1307(g)(1), the Administrator shall consider any period during which a property was continuously covered by private flood insurance (as defined in section 102(b)(8) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4021(a)(8))) to be a period of continuous coverage.

TITLE V—TAX RELIEF FOR HURRICANES HARVEY, IRMA, AND MARIA

SEC. 501. DEFINITIONS.

(a) HURRICANE HARVEY DISASTER ZONE AND DISASTER AREA.—For purposes of this title—

(1) HURRICANE HARVEY DISASTER ZONE.—The term ‘Hurricane Harvey disaster zone’ means that portion of the Hurricane Harvey disaster zone determined by the President to warrant individual or individual and public assistance from the Federal Government under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by reason of Hurricane Harvey.

(2) HURRICANE HARVEY DISASTER AREA.—The term ‘Hurricane Harvey disaster area’ means an area with respect to which a major disaster has been declared by the President before September 31, 2017, under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by reason of Hurricane Harvey.

(b) HURRICANE IRMA DISASTER ZONE AND DISASTER AREA.—For purposes of this title—

(1) HURRICANE IRMA DISASTER ZONE.—The term ‘Hurricane Irma disaster zone’ means that portion of the Hurricane Irma disaster area determined by the President to warrant individual and public assistance from the Federal Government under such Act by reason of Hurricane Irma.

(2) HURRICANE IRMA DISASTER AREA.—The term ‘Hurricane Irma disaster area’ means an area with respect to which a major disaster has been declared by the President before September 29, 2017, under section 401 of such Act by reason of Hurricane Irma.

(c) HURRICANE MARIA DISASTER ZONE AND DISASTER AREA.—For purposes of this title—

(1) HURRICANE MARIA DISASTER ZONE.—The term ‘Hurricane Maria disaster zone’ means that portion of the Hurricane Maria disaster area determined by the President to warrant individual and public assistance from the Federal Government under such Act by reason of Hurricane Maria.

(2) HURRICANE MARIA DISASTER AREA.—The term ‘Hurricane Maria disaster area’ means an area with respect to which a major disaster has been declared by the President before September 29, 2017, under section 401 of such Act by reason of Hurricane Maria.

SEC. 502. SPECIAL DISASTER-RELATED RULES FOR USE OF RETIREMENT FUNDS.

(a) TAX-FAVORED WITHDRAWALS FROM RETIREMENT PLANS.

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 72(t) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall not apply to any qualified hurricane distribution.

(2) AGGREGATE DOLLAR LIMITATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the aggregate amount of distributions received by an individual which may be treated as qualified hurricane distributions for any taxable year shall not exceed the amount of—

(I) $100,000
divided by (II) the aggregate amounts treated as qualified hurricane distributions received by such individual for all prior taxable years.

(B) CONTROLLED GROUP.—If a distribution to an individual would (without regard to subparagraph (A)) be a qualified hurricane distribution, a plan shall not be treated as not satisfying the requirement of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 merely because the plan treats such distribution as a qualified hurricane distribution, unless the aggregate amounts treated as qualified hurricane distributions from all plans maintained by the employer (and any member of any controlled group which includes the employer) to such individual exceed $100,000.

(C) CONTROLLED GROUP.—For purposes of subparagraph (B), the term ‘controlled group’ means any group treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(3) AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED MAY BE REPAID.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Any individual who receives a qualified hurricane distribution may, at any time during the 3-year period beginning on the day after the date on which such distribution is made, repay one or more contributions in an aggregate amount not to exceed the amount of such distribution to an eligible retirement plan of which such individual is a beneficiary and to which the individual has made a rollover contribution of such distribution which may be treated as a qualified hurricane distribution under section 402(c), 403(a)(4), 403(b)(8), 408(d)(3), or 457(e)(16), of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the case may be.

(B) TREATMENT OF EARNED AND DISTRIBUTIONS FROM ELIGIBLE RETIREMENT PLANS AS ELIGIBLE ROLLOVERS.—For purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, if a contribution is made pursuant to subparagraph (A) with respect to a qualified hurricane distribution, such contribution shall not be treated as an individual retirement plan, then the taxpayer shall, to the extent of the amount of the contribution, be treated as having received a distribution of such contribution in an eligible rollover distribution (as defined in section 402(c)(4) of such Code) and as having transferred the amount to the eligible retirement plan in a direct trustee to trustee transfer within 60 days of the distribution.

(C) TREATMENT OF REFERRALS FOR DISBURSEMENTS FROM IRAS.—For purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, if a contribution is made pursuant to subparagraph (A) with respect to a qualified hurricane distribution from an individual retirement plan (as defined by section 7701(a)(97) of such Code), then, to the extent of the amount of the contribution, the qualified hurricane distribution shall be treated as a rollover distribution described in section 408(d)(3) of such Code and as having been transferred to the eligible retirement plan in a direct trustee to trustee transfer within 60 days of the distribution.

(4) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection:

"(A) QUALIFIED HURRICANE DISTRIBUTION.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the term ‘qualified hurricane distribution’ means—

(i) any distribution from an eligible retirement plan made on or after August 23, 2017, and before January 1, 2019, to an individual whose principal place of abode on August 23, 2017, is located in the Hurricane Harvey disaster area and which has sustained an economic loss by reason of Hurricane Harvey.

(ii) any distribution (which is not described in clause (i)) from an eligible retirement plan made on or after September 4, 2017, and before January 1, 2019, to an individual whose principal place of abode on September 4, 2017, is located in the Hurricane Irma disaster area and which has sustained an economic loss by reason of Hurricane Irma, and

(iii) any distribution (which is not described in clause (i) or (ii)) from an eligible retirement plan made on or after September 16, 2017, and before January 1, 2019, to an individual whose principal place of abode on September 16, 2017, is located in the Hurricane Maria disaster area and which has sustained an economic loss by reason of Hurricane Maria.

(B) ELIGIBLE RETIREMENT PLAN.—The term ‘eligible retirement plan’ shall have the meaning given such term by section 402(c)(8)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(5) INCOME INCLUSION SPREAD OVER 3-YEAR PERIOD.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any qualified hurricane distribution, the taxpayer elects not to have this paragraph apply for any taxable year, any amount required to be included in gross income for such taxable year shall be so included ratably over the 3-taxable-year period beginning with such taxable year.

(B) SPECIAL RULE.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), rules similar to the rules of subparagraph (B) of section 408A(d)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall apply.

(6) SPECIAL RULES.—

"(A) E XEMPTION OF DISTRIBUTIONS FROM TRUSTEE TRANSFER AND WITHHOLDING RULES.—For purposes of sections 401(a)(31), 401(f), and 3605 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, qualified hurricane distributions shall not be treated as eligible rollover distributions.
(B) QUALIFIED HURRICANE DISTRIBUTIONS TREATED AS MEETING PLAN DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS.—For purposes the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, a qualified hurricane distribution shall be treated as meeting the requirements of sections 401(k)(2)(B)(i), 403(b)(7)(A)(ii), 403(b)(11), and 457(d)(1)(A) of such Code as if—

(1) RECONTRIBUTIONS OF WITHDRAWALS FOR HOME PURCHASES.—

(ii). 

(2) DELAY OF REPAYMENT.—In the case of a governmental plan (as defined in section 72(p)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) a qualified Hurricane Harvey individual whose principal place of abode on August 23, 2017, is located in the Hurricane Harvey disaster area and who has sustained an economic loss by reason of Hurricane Harvey, the amount of qualified wages which may be taken into account with respect to any individual shall not exceed $6,000.

(D) QUALIFIED HURRICANE MARIA INDIVIDUAL.—The term "qualified Hurricane Maria individual" means an individual (other than a qualified Hurricane Harvey individual) whose principal place of abode on September 4, 2017, is located in the Hurricane Maria disaster area and who has sustained an economic loss by reason of Hurricane Maria.

(4) QUALIFIED BEGINNING DATE.—For purposes of this subsection, the qualified beginning date is—

(i) in the case of any qualified hurricane Harvey individual, August 23, 2017;

(ii) in the case of any qualified Hurricane Irma individual, September 4, 2017, and

(iii) in the case of any qualified Hurricane Maria individual, September 16, 2017.

(5) PROVISIONS RELATING TO PLAN AMENDMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—This subsection applies to any amendment to any plan or annuity contract, such plan or contract shall be treated as being operated in accordance with the terms of the plan during the period described in paragraph (2)(B)(i).

(2) AMENDMENTS TO WHICH THIS SUBSECTION APPLIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—This subsection shall not apply to any amendment unless—

(i) pursuant to any provision of this section, or pursuant to any regulation issued by the Secretary, the Hurricane Harvey area, the Hurricane Irma area, or the Hurricane Maria disaster area, but which was not so purchased or constructed on account of Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, or Hurricane Maria;

(c) LOANS FROM QUALIFIED PLANS.—

(1) INCREASE IN LIMIT ON LOANS NOT TREATED AS DISTRIBUTIONS.—In the case of any loan from a qualified employer plan (as defined under section 72(p)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) to a qualified individual made after the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on December 31, 2018—

(A) clause (i) of section 72(p)(2)(A) of such Code shall be treated by substituting "$100,000" for "$50,000"; and

(B) clause (i) of such section shall be treated as if it applied by substituting "the present value of the nonforfeitable accrued benefit of the employee under the plan" for "one-half of the present value of the nonforfeitable accrued benefit of the employee under the plan".

(2) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a qualified individual with a remaining loan on or after the qualified beginning date from a qualified employer plan (as defined in section 72(p)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986)—

(A) if the due date pursuant to subparagraph (B) or (C) of section 72(p)(2) of such Code for any repayment with respect to such loan occurs during the period beginning on the qualified beginning date and ending on December 31, 2018, such due date shall be delayed for an additional 1 year,

(B) any subsequent repayments with respect to any such loan shall be appropriately adjusted to reflect the delay in the due date under paragraph (A),

(C) in determining the 5-year period and the term of a loan under subparagraph (B) or (C) of section 72(p)(2) of such Code, the term described in subparagraph (A) shall be disregarded.

(3) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this subsection—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term "qualified individual" means any qualified Hurricane Harvey individual, qualified Hurricane Irma individual, and any qualified Hurricane Maria individual.

(B) QUALIFIED HURRICANE HARVARTY INDIVIDUAL.—The term "qualified Hurricane Harvey individual" means an individual whose principal place of abode on August 23, 2017, is located in the Hurricane Harvey disaster area and who has sustained an economic loss by reason of Hurricane Harvey.

(C) QUALIFIED HURRICANE MARIA INDIVIDUAL.—The term "qualified Hurricane Maria individual" means an individual (other than a qualified Hurricane Harvey individual) whose principal place of abode on September 4, 2017, is located in the Hurricane Maria disaster area and who has sustained an economic loss by reason of Hurricane Maria.

(2) QUALIFIED BEGINNING DATE.—For purposes of this subsection, the qualified beginning date is—

(i) in the case of any qualified Hurricane Harvey individual, August 23, 2017;

(ii) in the case of any qualified Hurricane Irma individual, September 4, 2017, and

(iii) in the case of any qualified Hurricane Maria individual, September 16, 2017.

(5) PROVISIONS RELATING TO PLAN AMENDMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—This subsection shall not apply to any amendment unless—

(i) pursuant to any provision of this section, or pursuant to any regulation issued by the Secretary or the Secretary of Labor under any provision, and

(ii) on or before the last day of the first plan year beginning on or after January 1, 2019, or such later date as the Secretary may prescribe.

In the case of a governmental plan (as defined in section 414(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986), clause (i) shall be applied by substituting the date which is 2 years after the date otherwise applied under clause (i).

(B) CONDITIONS.—This subsection shall not apply to any amendment unless—

(i) during the period—

(I) beginning on the date this section or the regulation described in subparagraph (A)(i) takes effect (or in the case of a plan or contract amendment not required by this section or such regulation, the effective date specified by the plan), and

(II) ending on the date described in subparagraph (A)(ii) (or, if earlier, the date the plan or contract amendment is adopted), the plan or contract is operated as if such plan or contract amendment were in effect, and

(ii) such plan or contract amendment applies retroactively for such period.
wages which may be taken into account with respect to any individual shall not exceed $6,000.

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

(A) Eligible employer.—The term ‘‘eligible employer’’ means any employer—

(i) which conducted an active trade or business before September 4, 2017, in the Hurricane Irma disaster zone, and

(ii) with respect to whom the trade or business described in clause (i) is inoperable on any day after September 4, 2017, and before January 1, 2018, as a result of damage sustained by reason of Hurricane Irma.

(B) Eligible employee.—The term ‘‘eligible employee’’ means with respect to an eligible employer an employee whose principal place of employment on September 4, 2017, was in the Hurricane Irma disaster zone.

(C) Qualified wages.—The term ‘‘qualified wages’’ means wages (as defined in section 51(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, but without regard to section 3306(b)(2)(B) of such Code) paid or incurred by an eligible employer with respect to an eligible employee on any day after September 4, 2017, and before January 1, 2018, which occurs during the period—

(i) beginning on the date on which the trade or business described in subparagraph (A) first became inoperable at the principal place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and

(ii) ending on the date on which such trade or business has resumed significant operations at such principal place of employment.

Such term shall include wages paid without regard to whether the employee performs no services, performs services at a different place of employment than such principal place of employment, or performs services at such principal place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and before January 1, 2018, which occurs during the period—

(i) beginning on the date on which the trade or business described in subparagraph (A) first became inoperable at the principal place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and

(ii) ending on the date on which such trade or business has resumed significant operations at such principal place of employment.

Such term shall include wages paid without regard to whether the employee performs no services, performs services at a different place of employment than such principal place of employment, or performs services at such principal place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and before January 1, 2018, which occurs during the period—

(i) beginning on the date on which the trade or business described in subparagraph (A) first became inoperable at the principal place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and

(ii) ending on the date on which such trade or business has resumed significant operations at such principal place of employment.

Such term shall include wages paid without regard to whether the employee performs no services, performs services at a different place of employment than such principal place of employment, or performs services at such principal place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and before January 1, 2018, which occurs during the period—

(i) beginning on the date on which the trade or business described in subparagraph (A) first became inoperable at the principal place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and

(ii) ending on the date on which such trade or business has resumed significant operations at such principal place of employment.

(C) Certain rules to apply.—For purposes of this subsection—

(i) the term ‘‘employer’’ means any employer within the meaning of section 3401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986,

(ii) the term ‘‘employee’’ means any employee within the meaning of section 3401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986,

(iii) the term ‘‘district’’ means any disaster area, and

(iv) the term ‘‘disaster area’’ means the place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and before January 1, 2018, which occurs during the period—

(i) beginning on the date on which the trade or business described in subparagraph (A) first became inoperable at the principal place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and

(ii) ending on the date on which such trade or business has resumed significant operations at such principal place of employment.

SEC. 504. ADDITIONAL DISASTER-RELATED TAX RELIEF PROVISIONS.

(a) Temporary Suspension of Limitations on Charitable Contributions.—

(1) In general.—Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2), subsection (b) of section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall not apply to qualified contributions and such contributions shall not be taken into account for purposes of applying subparagraph (A) or (B) of section 170(b) of such Code, with respect to an individual for any calendar year which includes the period—

(I) beginning on the date on which the trade or business described in subparagraph (A) first became inoperable at the principal place of employment of the employee immediately before Hurricane Irma, and

(II) ending on the date on which such trade or business has resumed significant operations at such principal place of employment.

(2) Limitation.—Any qualified contribution shall be allowed only to the extent that the aggregate of such contributions does not exceed the excess of the taxpayer’s contribution limitation under section 170(b)(1)(C) of such Code over the amount of all other charitable contributions allowed under section 170(b)(1) of such Code.

(b) Special Rules for Qualified Disaster-Related Personal Casualty Losses.—

(1) In general.—If an individual has a net disaster loss for any taxable year—

(I) the amount of the aggregate of qualified contributions made in the calendar year (within the meaning of section 170(b)(1) of such Code) in excess of the annual limitation on contributions described in subparagraph (B) of section 170(b)(1) of such Code shall be added to the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code, and

(II) such term shall include—

(A) the aggregate of qualified contributions made in the calendar year (within the meaning of section 170(b)(1)(A) of such Code) which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code, and

(B) the aggregate of qualified contributions made in the calendar year (within the meaning of section 170(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code.

(2) Exception.—Such term shall not include any contribution of a donor if the contributions—

(I) to an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or

(II) for the establishment of a new, or maintenance of an existing, donor advised fund (as defined in section 4946(d)(2) of such Code).

(3) Application of Election to Partnerships and S Corporations.—In the case of a partnership or S corporation, the election under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be made separately by each partner or shareholder.

(b) Limitation on Contributions.—

(1) In general.—If an individual has a net disaster loss for any taxable year—

(I) the amount of the aggregate of qualified contributions made in the calendar year (within the meaning of section 170(b)(1)(A) of such Code) which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code, and

(II) such term shall include—

(A) the aggregate of qualified contributions made in the calendar year (within the meaning of section 170(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code, and

(B) the aggregate of qualified contributions made in the calendar year (within the meaning of section 170(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code.

(c) Application of Election to Partnerships and S Corporations.—In the case of a partnership or S corporation, the election under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be made separately by each partner or shareholder.

(d) Special Rules for Qualified Disaster-Related Personal Casualty Losses.—

(1) In general.—If an individual has a net disaster loss for any taxable year—

(I) the amount of the aggregate of qualified contributions made in the calendar year (within the meaning of section 170(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code, and

(II) the taxpayer obtains from the individual 90 percent of any contributions described in subparagraph (A) of such section which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code.

(2) Exception.—If an individual has a net disaster loss for any taxable year—

(I) the amount of the aggregate of qualified contributions made in the calendar year (within the meaning of section 170(b)(1)(A) of such Code) which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code, and

(II) the taxpayer obtains from the individual 90 percent of any contributions described in subparagraph (A) of such section which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code.

(3) Exception to Overall Limitation on Contributions.—If an individual has a net disaster loss for any taxable year—

(I) the amount of the aggregate of qualified contributions made in the calendar year (within the meaning of section 170(b)(1)(A) of such Code) which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code, and

(II) the taxpayer obtains from the individual 90 percent of any contributions described in subparagraph (A) of such section which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code.

(d) Exception.—An individual shall not be allowed a deduction under this subsection for any period with respect to any deduction allowed under section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 if such deduction is taken into account for purposes of applying subparagraph (A) of such section which exceed the excess described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 170(h)(2)(A) of such Code.
personal casualty losses" means losses described in section 165(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986—
(A) which arise in the Hurricane Harvey disaster area on or after August 23, 2017, and which are attributable to Hurricane Harvey,
(B) which arise in the Hurricane Irma disaster area on or after September 4, 2017, and which are attributable to Hurricane Irma, or
(C) which arise in the Hurricane Maria disaster area on or after September 16, 2017, and which are attributable to Hurricane Maria.
(4) EARNED INCOME.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘‘earned income’’ has the meaning given such term under section 32(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
(b) SPECIAL RULE FOR DETERMINING EARNED INCOME.—
(A) APPLICATION TO JOINT RETURNS.—For purposes of paragraph (1), in the case of a joint return for a taxable year which includes the applicable date, the earned income of the principal place of abode of the individual is treated as the earned income of such individual, if the earned income of the principal place of abode of the individual is less than the earned income of the principal place of abode of the other individual.
(B) UNIFORM APPLICATION OF ELECTION.—Any election made under subparagraph (A) shall apply with respect to both sections 2(h)(1) and 32, of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
(C) ERRORS TREATED AS MATHEMATICAL ERROR.—For purposes of section 6213 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, an incorrect use on a return of earned income pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be treated as a mathematical or clerical error.
(D) NO EFFECT ON DETERMINATION OF GROSS INCOME, ETC.—Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be applied with respect to any substitution under paragraph (1).
(2) DEFINITION AND SPECIAL RULES.—
(A) MIRROR CODE TAX SYSTEM.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘‘mirror code tax system’’ means the income tax laws of the United States and the States, as may be necessary to reflect the income tax laws of such States.
(B) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘‘aggregate benefits’’ means any aggregate benefit provided by the Secretaries of the Treasury and the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Housing Act of 1937 and section 107 of the United States Housing Act of 1937.
(C) APPLICABLE DATE.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘‘applicable date’’ means—
(A) in the case of a qualified Hurricane Harvey individual, August 23, 2017,
(B) in the case of a qualified Hurricane Irma individual, September 4, 2017,
(C) in the case of a qualified Hurricane Maria individual, September 16, 2017.
This title is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 933(g)).
to Ocean Reef have been working around the clock with their teams to get utilities up and running, roads cleared, and government offices operational.

I am grateful to our first responders and all the heroic public servants and private citizens who have been working hard to serve the people of the Florida Keys.

I also want to thank my office's Florida Keys director, Nicole Rapanos, who has dedicated long hours to assist our constituents and their neighbors in the Keys so that they can get the resources they need. I am grateful for her dedication to her neighbors and proud to have her on my staff.

Community organizations are also playing an instrumental role in the Keys' recovery. Nonprofit groups like Star of the Sea Outreach, Rotary Club of Key West, and the Florida Keys Outreach Coalition, just to name a few, have been volunteering their time, coordinating donations, and serving directly.

Private companies and small businesses have also stepped up to help. Robert Spottswood, whose family owns the Marriott Beachside, opened up the hotel to first responders, Navy personnel, and others who chose to ride out the storm.

Baby's Coffee, which was left with its own damage from the storm, was providing its entire stock to residents of Key West, along with hot meals and coffee.

Ikon Builders and UDT have brought supplies to the food banks and donation distribution centers. The Marathon EOC, which has been operating 24/7 and where approximately one-third of employees had lost their homes, these people continued working to help in recovery and rebuilding, and the list goes on.

On the individual level, people have gone above and beyond to show their true community spirit. They have shared their own supplies and taken time to go help neighbors. The outpouring of support from local heroes in the Florida Keys has been so extraordinary, I could be here all day telling the stories of thousands upon thousands of acts of kindness. This powerful sense of community and humanity is one of the many reasons I am proud to represent these local heroes.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the Keys' recovery is well underway. Tourism will be key.

Mr. SPEAKER. Mr. Speaker, first I want to acknowledge those individuals that Mr. Curbelo pointed out and congratulate them for their courage and their kindness as they attempt to get southern Florida back on its feet.

But the key phrase here that my friend from Florida mentioned was the following: Now it is time for us to do our part.

"Our part" calls for a much more vigorous effort, a much more robust investment, and it could, it should, be done now. We don't have to get this done. We don't have to parcel this out in the small amounts that are being suggested.

Now, earlier this week, I rose in opposition to H.R. 3823, the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act, as well. Today, I am disappointed to say that I am not going to support today's updated version of the legislation either, based on the word "more." I have no issue with a clean 6-month extension of the FAA expenditure authority, but today's bill includes an extensive list of extraneous provisions.

If we are to include extraneous measures on this must-pass legislation, then the process of compiling the bill should have been done in a bipartisan manner. Instead, our Republican friends assembled their near-term priorities barely, if at all, consulting the Democratic minority, even though many of these issues are indeed bipartisan.

Worse, rather than work together to solve what is rapidly becoming an American humanitarian crisis, they chose to take most of the day off to unveil the tax cut for the wealthiest people in America.

The priorities at this moment are misguided. As I noted earlier this week, while I support the disaster tax relief in this bill, the package is plainly insufficient. I had hoped that we might work together in a manner on these provisions, but that has not occurred.

Traditionally, in this body, we honored and used to respect what is known as the national principle. It was a code of honor that bound us together when one part of the Nation was beset by disaster. Whether it was an earthquake in California, a hurricane in North Carolina, a tornado in Massachusetts, floods in Missouri, or forest fires in Alabama, we did not ask about gender, race, geography. We simply said the national principle prevails and the Federal Government will offer a robust response.

We are falling in that respect to set the precedent today. Instead, unfortunately, this disaster relief package that we will consider does not provide the comprehensive package of incentives and relief that will drive investments and speed up recovery in American communities in Texas, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the devastation across Puerto Rico.
These hurricanes left massive devastation in their wake, and the ongoing situation in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are dire. The situation not only justifies but demands a comprehensive package of incentives and relief to help these communities and their residents get back to their feet. Republicans will hide behind an amendment they added to the Rules Committee last night. It is really a fig leaf, amounting to $68 per person in tax relief. We can do much more for our American brothers and sisters in the Caribbean, especially given that the administration continues to drag its feet in terms of sending an emergency supplemental request. That should be done forthwith. We can do better, and we must do better.

They are making vague assurances that we will get around to considering a more extensive package later, but delay and uncertainty will make the situation worse, not better.

Today’s package should have included other powerful and proven tax incentives that we have extended in the past disaster recovery efforts consistently. I consider this a missed opportunity. We have to do more to help our fellow Americans recover from these tragedies. Therefore, I intend to oppose this legislation.

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

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), the distinguished chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank Mr. CURBELO for his leadership in crafting this disaster relief package for our communities, and Chairman SHUSTER for his leadership on this bill as well.

I rise today not only on behalf of the people in my district in Texas who have been just hammered, but on behalf of everyone in Texas, Puerto Rico, Florida, and the Virgin Islands, who have been devastated by this fall’s destructive hurricanes.

These are people who desperately need the support of our bill, the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act. Hundreds of thousands of families have lost everything, even loved ones. This bill will help them begin to recover through meaningful, targeted tax relief they need now.

Earlier this week, as communities continued to be decimated by record-high wind gusts, flooding, and storm surges, regrettably, my House Democratic friends opposed this critical bill, putting politics above the very people they represent.

I stand here today to say we all have to do better. We have to show the Nation we can stand together in times of great tragedy to help each other and our neighbors, just as our people did in our district in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge support for this bill.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, my heart and sympathy go out to those impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. I am committed to providing the resources necessary for Federal response and recovery.

We all voted for the money a week and a half in. That took 3 days. Other storms in the past took 3 months, so let’s set the record straight.

I am pleased to support aid to those affected by Harvey, Irma, Maria, and I will continue to do so. We urgently need to deliver relief and assistance to those currently impacted by Hurricane Maria in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, where the entire island has lost power and many are without water.

I can’t support a bill before us today which is not even close to providing the robust relief that Puerto Rico needs. You know it, and we know it. The Congress and this administration need to step up, help Puerto Rico recover.

I plan to reintroduce legislation to extend the earned income tax credit to residents of Puerto Rico, and I hope my colleagues will support it.

The bill before us today completely circumvented the committee process. I believe that this bill did not have any hearing, despite the fact that myself and my Republican colleague from New York, Mr. REED, have had legislation on comprehensive disaster relief for the last 5 years.

I want to address something my good friend from Texas, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, put out yesterday in response to my position and others. He said that Democrats were using hurricane relief as a “bar- gain chip” and “playing politics.” I want fairness. If that is politics, so be it. I plead guilty. I want fairness.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), the chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3823.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear what is at stake if Congress fails to pass the FAA extension. Starting on October 1, no aviation taxes will be collected. Approximately $40 million of revenue will be lost each day; the revenue that would have been used for airport infrastructure funding and the FAA’s critical safety, operational, and research functions.

No new Airport Improvement Program grants will be issued to airports in the communities across the country. All FAA accounts funded out of the aviation trust fund—the Facilities and Equipment; AIP; Research, Engineering, and Development accounts—will be impacted.

Thousands of employees will be furloughed and some will be required to show up to work for no pay.

Congress shouldn’t pick and choose who gets disaster relief and who doesn’t based on political whims. Tax relief should not be reserved only for victims of a storm that happened to impact the home district—

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

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, this bill needlessly pits residents of Texas and Florida against residents of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Louisiana, West Virginia, Utah, and other states. We should treat everyone fairly, and the Reed-Pascrell bill would do that.

Tax relief provisions would kick in automatically for federally declared disaster situations, even in Montana, even in Alaska. We should not play favorites when it comes to helping those in need.

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

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, so let’s be clear about who is playing politics here. New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut continue to feel the effects of Hurricane Sandy, just as Carolinians, Carolinians, and people from West Virginia and Louisiana still feel the effects of the major floods of 2015 and 2016. This is true in many other States.

So while this bill takes a few provisions from our bill, it does not get into the heart of the problem, as to how we can help everybody. This bill doesn’t do enough in the first place, and it doesn’t include victims of other disasters.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to demand robust and fair disaster tax relief. And if that is politics, so be it. I plead guilty. I want fairness.
including those in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The FAA is currently trying to restore radars, navigational aids, and other equipment damaged during Hurricane Maria. This is happening while stranded passengers in the San Juan airport wait without air-conditioning and electricity for flights off the island.

The FAA technicians are working around the clock to restore services, but because of the extent of the damage and the challenges of the terrain where equipment is located, it is difficult to determine when full restoration will happen.

For instance, as we debate this bill, technicians are making their way to a long-range radar site on a mountain in Puerto Rico. The last two miles to the site through the forest are impassable, so the technicians are using chainsaws to clear a path for themselves and their replacement equipment. The radar and navigation equipment are critical for the safe operation of flights.

We will have plenty of time to debate aviation policy in the coming weeks, and I look forward to it. But the FAA extension we are considering this week is not a pawn in a Washington game of political brinksmanship.

It is time for Congress to ensure the FAA’s authorities, funding, and disaster recovery efforts continue uninterrupted in order to help those impacted by the hurricanes that are desperately needed.

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

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), who is the ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, this would be the fourth FAA extension in 2 years. It didn’t have to be this way. We had the cooperation of the committee in the last Congress and this Congress that was bipartisan except for one provision; that is the privatization of the Air Traffic Organization.

Now, there is a citizen group out there called Citizens for On Time Flights—actually, Airlines for America funds this—who are saying that we have to fly these old zigzag routes with 1950s’ radar, and if only we, the airlines—the same airlines, by the way, that we had their dispatch and reservation systems go down 39 times in 2 years. The National Air Traffic System has gone down in the last 2 years.

By any way, they could do better, they say—or Citizens for On Time Flights say. But, unfortunately, it is based on lies.

We have deployed a system where we could fly planes closer together. It is operational, actually, but the airlines have the equipment and they use it, and they are not going to purchase that equipment until 2020 or after.

So they are saying the FAA is dragging its feet; the FAA is over budget; the FAA is this, the FAA is that. No. Actually, it is the airlines that haven’t purchased the equipment to use that system.

Now, the other most egregious part of this privatization proposal is that Chairman Brady, has decided to give taxing authority to the private corporations. Now, they are not going to call it taxes. It is fees. Okay.

But right now we finance our Air Traffic Organization with a 7% percent tax, a progressive tax: the more expensive your ticket, the more you pay. That is how we finance, predominantly, our Air Traffic Organization.

Well, this bill repeals that ticket tax. First thing that happens is the airlines raise their tickets by 7% percent. They already did that once 5 years ago when there was a temporary lapse. Only two airlines didn’t, Spirit and Alaska. Everybody else grabbed the money and ran, $400 billion.

So Congress repeals the ticket tax. They raise prices 7 1/2 percent, and then they would get three seats on the board. Three seats will go to direct airlines interests to decide what passengers and how people will pay to use the national airspace. So they, in all probability, will come up with a higher tax.

So, in addition to paying $7 billion a year for baggage fees, now we are going to start charging people to use the national airspace with a flat tax. So, hey, that is a big, great win for the people with first class tickets. The people, of course, who have got a $100 coach seat are now going to be paying more like 20 percent or 25 percent. And the person with a $2,000 ticket is going to pay, basically, 3 times more.

So this is all really unfortunate because we could have passed already out of this House a bipartisan bill, sent it to the Senate. Instead of trying to jam them with this bill that is loaded down with riders, we would be jamming them with a本网, or a long-term policy for the FAA and the traveling public and the aviation industry in America.

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman. Mr. Speaker, Mr. DeFAZIO, you have already heard from the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), who is a member of the committee, who is going to oppose the bill because of provisions regarding private flood insurance. He thinks it will cause Federal flood insurance to collapse. And the two Senators from Louisiana who they are attempting to jam with this bill are saying they are going to oppose the bill and block it in the Senate. So we may end up with a continuing authorization. I wanted the FAA and the Airway Extension Act of 2017. It also includes a 3-month extension for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians. This is an important program for many of the Tribes that I represent in my district.

It is also a 3-month extension of the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program that is set to expire at the end of this week.

It is estimated that we could have a national doctor shortage of 25,000 by 2025, and when you look at the rural areas like mine in eastern Washington, it is especially stark. We know primary care saves lives, and that is why it is so important to include these provisions in a long-term reauthorization of the THCGME program.

This program specially trains residents in some of the larger shortage areas; and when you compare it to the traditional Medicare program, the Teaching Health Center residents are 3 1/2 times more likely to practice primary care, twice as likely to work in rural areas, and 2 1/2 times more likely to work in the underserved areas.

It is a part of the solution in solving our primary care crisis, but it must be funded. That is why it is so important to continue this funding and this legislation. Without the funding, the program will unravel. The centers could be forced to ramp down their residents could be terminated, and some centers may be shut down and their programs eliminated altogether.

I encourage my colleagues to recognize the importance of this program and encourage them to continue working with me on a long-term solution that ensures the future success of this vital program.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for his leadership. He has been particularly helpful in working through how we can work together on the multiple crises that Texas, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico are facing.

Let me thank the manager of the bill for working on the issues as well.

Let me first of all indicate, as I have done earlier today, that I understand that the FAA extension is a clean extension which I will support, recognizing the international airport that is in my district. But again, I will seek the important leadership on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and particularly, the ranking
member, when it comes to dealing with not supporting privatization of air traffic controllers.

I want to speak specifically to the hurricane tax relief. As I do so, let me particularly make mention that I had hoped this week would have an extension of the CHIP program and the community health centers. Maybe we can work on that, because I know in many of our communities impacted by the hurricanes, those elements are important, community health centers, and, certainly, the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

I do want to make a point to say that I wish we could have gone further. I know that there were at least 21 different tax credits or exemptions that we could have had to help those who are impacted by the hurricanes, but these, I want to cite and say that I appreciate them being utilized for my constituents now.

The bill will provide tax credit deductions and other relief to taxpayers in disaster areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Most measures would apply to taxpayers in parts of Florida, Puerto Rico, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In particular, access to one’s retirement funds, the bill would waive the 10 percent penalty on each distribution from retirement accounts for taxpayers in affected areas. Individuals will be eligible to make the withdrawal if their primary residence was in one of the disaster areas as of the date of the storm and they sustained an economic loss.

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

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3828, the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017, which provides additional time to debate the future of our Nation’s air traffic control system.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of Charlotte Douglas’ air traffic control tower and learned firsthand from the controllers about the importance of modernizing our traffic control system. Fortunately, Chairman BILL SHUSTER exercised leadership through spearheading H.R. 2997, the 21st Century AIRR Act, that does just that, by shifting the current bureaucratic and broken air traffic control to a stakeholder-managed, not-for-profit corporation. With NextGen projected to ultimately cost $120 billion, it is imperative that we fix our air traffic control in this Congress.

Importantly, the 21st Century AIRR Act also strengthens air service in rural communities through ensuring that general aviation will have full access to U.S. airspace. It advances the remote air traffic control tower program, which means that rural communities are fully integrated into our Nation’s air traffic control system.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues on this critical issue facing the Fifth District of South Carolina.

Ms. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York, NYdia VELÁZQUEZ.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I really appreciate those kind words.

Mr. Speaker, I do so in this bipartisan way, working with Mr. NEAL, working with the chairman of the committee, and really making sure we have a long-term response to the journey that my constituents and others will have to take.

I close by saying that now we are up to 185,000 homes that have been severely damaged or damaged. We have got problems with mortgage deductions and a number of other issues, and, therefore, I am hoping we can work together.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN).
assistance contained in previous dis-
taster tax packages as we did to our
family and friends in places like Texas
and Louisiana.

Therefore, I urge my colleagues to
oppose this legislation, and I yield back
the balance of my time.

Mr. CURBelo of Florida. Mr. Speak-
er, I yield myself the balance of my
time.

Mr. Speaker, I truly deplore the way
some colleagues have decided to poli-
tize such a sensitive, urgent, and im-
portant issue. There are people in my
community who are suffering, who lost
their homes, yet they are still working hard
to help their neighbors rebuild. For
them to find out that this institution
would oppose a measure to help them
because some colleagues think it is
just not good enough—now, you heard
them. They recognize there is a lot of
good in this package, but it is not
enough. They recognize there is a lot of
good in this package, but it is not
enough. So because this is not good
enough, so instead we will do nothing
is just unacceptable.

I urge my colleagues to reconsider
because I think it is important that we
send a message of national unity to
help those who are hurting. If we can
do more in the future, we will and we
should.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would
just thank all of my colleagues that
understand how urgent this situation
is, how much pain and suffering are
being experienced in these commu-
nities, and I ask them respectfully to
please support this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time
has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I
yield myself such time as I may con-
sume.

Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the
terrible tragedy and suffering from
Harvey, Irma, and Maria. We have seen
the shattered homes, and we have seen
the shattered lives. I have been to
Houston and my native Texas to visit
with a number of the victims.

There are many tragedies, Mr. Speaker,
out of these hurricanes and flooding,
but one of the tragedies—one
of the tragedies—is that in Harris
County, where Houston is, 80 percent
of the homes that were flooded didn't
have flood insurance.

Now, why didn't they have flood in-
urance, Mr. Speaker? I believe one of the reasons is because
we have a government monopoly called
the National Flood Insurance Program.

Many people don't even know of its ex-
istence. Many people think they were
safe because they were 3 feet outside of
the government-designated flood zone.

I want to say that somehow this was simply rolled into their
homeowners’ insurance policy, but it
wasn't.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have an opportu-
nity to make sure that people have
more affordable options for flood insur-
ance.

Wouldn't it be wonderful that for
every time you saw a life insurance
commercial or an auto insurance com-
mercial, you saw something about
flood insurance to help educate the
American people about the need for
this basic insurance policy?

We could see the savings occur as
people rolled this into their home-
owners’ policy.

In the very small portion of the mar-
et, Mr. Speaker, where there is com-
petition, people are saving not just
hundreds of dollars, but thousands of
dollars.

We have heard from the Megoulas
family in Pennsylvania: “NFIP insur-
ance would have cost me $2,700 a year,
but I was able to find private coverage
for only $718.”

We heard from the Cyr family, also of
Pennsylvania: “I have benefited from
switching to private market flood in-
surance from FEMA. I save about $1,000
per year.”

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a piece of
legislation known as the Flood Insur-
ance Reform and Modernization
Act, also known as Ross-Castor. I want
to thank my colleague from Florida
(Mr. Ross) for his leadership on this
issue. It is very simple. It simply clari-
fies congressional intent that people
ought to have more options.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, as people
begin to rebuild after these hurricanes,
they need better options for flood in-
surance, particularly with the NFIP $30
billion in debt, facing another bailout,
and facing an uncertain future. Now we
need to take care of that.

That is why I have proposed, along
with Chairman Duffy, a 5-year, long-
term reauthorization. We are currently
operating under a temporary 90-day au-
thorization. But as we do, let’s work on
something that we can all agree on.

The last time this bill came up in the
House, Mr. Speaker, 419-0. It has re-
cently come out of the Financial Ser-
dices Committee 58-0.

I am not sure you can get that kind
of vote tally for a Mother’s Day resolu-
tion. It is bipartisan. It is the very def-
inition of bipartisan.

So let’s take one important step
today to help the victims of Harvey,
Irma, and Maria begin to re-
build their homes, to have more flood
insurance options, more affordable in-
surance options. As we work through
what we might disagree on in the NFIP
authorization, let’s pass today what we
can agree on and help the victims
today.

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California.
Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time
as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposi-
tion to this bill, which began as a
must-pass reauthorization of the Fed-
eral Aviation Administration but has
now become a Christmas tree for unrelated Republican priorities.

Puerto Rico is on the brink of a humanitarian crisis following Hurricane Maria that is being exacerbated by Trump’s and Congress’ failure to adequately fund the NFIP. Florida, Texas, and Louisiana are just beginning to pick up the pieces following Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Yet, other than the small initial down payment of disaster aid we passed—which I might add Chairwoman Walorski voted against—Congress has yet to pass a single policy reform that will actually improve the lives of any of those who found themselves in harm’s way.

This is the first time in this Congress that we are debating a flood insurance policy change on the House floor. However, this is not a policy change that would address the resilience of the Flood Insurance Program, help families to recover, or improve our country’s response to natural disasters. No. The Republican response to the catastrophic storms of these last 2 months is to muscle through the expansion of private flood insurance, which has long been blocked by the insurance industry. Now, let me be clear. I don’t oppose this policy. I voted for it last Congress. I voted for it when we marked it up in committee this year. But moving this bill at this time, while ignoring all the other options on the table including the Flood Insurance Program and the ongoing natural disasters in our country, is simply irresponsible.

The NFIP will expire on December 8 of this year. The Senate plan is to ensure that it is reauthorized for the long term. Therefore, I will oppose any and all efforts to break apart the debate on substantive reforms to the NFIP from the reauthorization debate we should so desperately be having.

The bill before us today does absolutely nothing to address the stability of the NFIP, which is in jeopardy following a devastating series of catastrophic storms across Florida, Louisiana, and the U.S. territories. We know that we will need to increase the NFIP’s borrowing authority so that policyholders from Harvey, Irma, and Maria can be made whole, but the chairman has no plan to deal with the debt, frequently telling those of us who have urged him to consider debt forgiveness to just forget about that idea.

I have long called for Congress to forgive the nearly $200 billion of the unsustainable burden placed on policyholders paying hundreds of millions of dollars a year just on the interest for the government to pay itself back. Flood insurance is already unaffordable.

So why are we continuing to make it worse by saddling policyholders with interest on a debt that will never be repaid?

We need thoughtful, comprehensive solutions to a long-term reauthorization that addresses the debt, affordability, mapping, and mitigation. That is not what we have before us today.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Ross), who is the author of the bipartisan Flood Insurance Market Modernization Act, which passed this body in the last Congress 419–0. He is the vice chairman of the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee and the real leader for affordable private flood insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this desperately needed legislation. Included in this bill are two provisions that are particularly important to my constituents in central Florida. One is tax relief for families and small businesses recovering from the destruction of Hurricanes Harvey, Maria, and Irma. The other is language taken from my legislation, the Private Flood Insurance Market Development Act, which will allow private sector insurers to compete with the National Flood Insurance Program.

The catastrophic impact of the three major hurricanes is heartbreaking and tragic. However, it has been inspiring to witness the outpouring of charity and goodwill from our communities in response.

Now it is time for this Congress to rise to the occasion. The tax relief for disaster victims in this legislation is a great first step.

This bill will help individuals in the disaster areas keep their jobs, support retirement savers paying for recovery, encourage charitable contributions to help victims, and put more money in the pockets of families trying to get their lives back on track after having lost everything.

To deny our constituents this relief because it is not enough is simply irresponsible. To be sure, I agree that more aid will likely be needed. But is that really a good excuse to do nothing?

I certainly don’t think so.

Mr. Speaker, this bill isn’t just about providing immediate relief. Thankfully, it also provides some measure of long-term relief to communities vulnerable to floods—the most costly of all natural disasters.

Thanks to the inclusion of my legislation, H.R. 422, this bill will provide consumers with more options and lower costs in the flood insurance marketplace as well as help to reduce the unacceptable number of homes not insured for flood losses.

Last Congress this House passed nearly identical legislation by a vote of 419–0. That is why I was so disheartened to hear some characterize this reform as a long-time Republican priority. This isn’t a Republican priority, and it is not a Democratic priority. This is a national priority.

The NFIP is more than $25 billion in debt and runs an annual deficit of $1.4 billion. Folks, this is an insurance company on the brink of being unable to pay out claims to policyholders without another taxpayer bailout.

The NFIP desperately needs to offload some of its risk, and we can help by allowing the private sector to do what it does best: compete for customers by offering better service, lower prices, and more comprehensive coverage.

I understand some of my colleagues think competition will destabilize the NFIP. First, we should make clear that the NFIP in its current state is beleaguered, it is not stable, and it is not sustainable. Reforms must be made.

Second, I would urge my colleagues to recognize that by forcing nearly all of the flood risk in this Nation into a single, government-run insurance program, we contribute to the NFIP’s bloated and unstable risk portfolio.

So the NFIP needs some help, and consumers need competition. More coverage options will help make flood insurance an attractive investment for everyone, thereby reducing the number of uninsured homes.

Without the NFIP alone, our constituents are severely limited. For example, an NFIP policy only covers up to $250,000 of damages.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. ROSS. In addition, NFIP policies do not cover homeowners displaced by flood, such as those displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Ross-Castor language passed the House last year by a vote of 419–0, and it was included in the RECID a letter from 15 major insurance, housing, banking, and trade associations in support of the private flood insurance provisions in H.R. 3823.

September 26, 2017.

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

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Democrat Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN AND LEADER PELOSI:

The undersigned trades and organizations strongly support the “Development of a Private Flood Insurance Market” title of H.R. 3823, the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017. This package includes bipartisan private flood insurance provisions that are endorsed by the Ross-Castor language clarifies what is already in federal law (following the passage of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and reinforced in the Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014) intended by Congress to allow lenders to accept private flood insurance in lieu of federal
coverage to satisfy the mandatory purchase requirement.

The undersigned trades and organizations strongly support inclusion of the bipartisan Ross-Duffy language in the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 that allows consumers the choice of government or private flood insurance coverage. I would note in favor of this important legislative package when it is considered by the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

Property Casualty Insurers Association of America (PCI)
Reinsurance Association of America (RAA)
National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC)
National Apartment Association (NAA)
American Bankers Association (ABA)
Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers (CIAB)
American Insurance Association (AIA)
National Association of REALTORS® (NAR)
National Association of Professional Insurance Agents (PIA)
Financial Services Roundtable (FSR)
Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America (Big “I”)
Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA)
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC)
Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA)
National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions (NAFCU)

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT), a senior member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, let me start off by letting the America people know fully why we Democrats on this side of the aisle are opposed to this bill.

Nobody has worked as hard as Demo-
crats on this bill, Mr. Speaker, but the reason we object to it is that the flood insurance part of this bill was a result of cherry-picking items that they wanted. The American people deserve better than that. Then they attach it to an FAA bill with a 6-month extension. That is no way to treat the issues that we have today.

All you have got to do is click on the television and look at what is happen-
ing to American citizens in Puerto Rico, Florida, Texas. And you are going to put something where they cherry-picked this together to solve this particular problem?

There is no sense of urgency here, Mr. Speaker.

Another reason is that, unlike all of our other disaster tax credit relief packages, every time we have had an expansion added to the bill, we expanded these tax credits for low-income people, expanded the tax credits for the new markets area for people to immediately come in and invest. Not in this bill. There is no expansion in this bill.

My friends over there talk about bipo-
partisanship. My middle name is bipar-
tisanship. There is nobody on that committee who works harder for bipar-
tisanship than DAVID SCOTT.

But the one piece of bipartisanship— our amendment that I worked fever-
ishly on with the gentleman from Wis-
consin (Mr. DUFFY), in which we were able to address the issue of the penal-
alties of expense on those poor people who chose to have their monthly in-
stalments there and not be punished for it.

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. We worked together on that and cut that cost in half. That one bipartisan piece of endeavor in our Financial Services Committee is not even included in this bill. That is why we are opposed to it.

Let’s treat the American people the way they deserve. There is no better time. You are talking about expanding the help. Our people, American citizens in Puerto Rico, Florida, and Texas, deserve for us to have a complete flood insurance program, not piecemeal.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I re-
serve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAL-
LONE), the ranking member of the En-
ergy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose H.R. 3823.

First, I would like to mention I have deep concerns over Republicans’ failure to extend vital healthcare programs that are life-saving, including important bipartisan programs like CHIP, Community Health Centers, and the National Health Service Corps. If we fail to act, access to affordable and quality care for children and vulner-
able populations nationwide will be jeopardized.

However, I want to focus on another issue that is extremely important to my constituents: flood insurance.

This bill would undermine efforts to comprehensively reform the National Flood Insurance Program by allowing the development of a private flood in-
surance market while not confronting challenges to NFIP; like increasing af-
fordability, investing in mitigation, and ensuring transparency and ac-
countability. It would not even reau-
thorize the flood insurance program, which is due to expire on December 8; or raise its borrowing authority, which is due to run out in the coming weeks and could impact claims from Hurri-
canes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

When Superstorm Sandy devastated New Jersey 5 years ago, some of the hardest hit communities were in my district, and the NFIP did not help them, why it should have. Too many of my constituents are still deal-

ing with high premiums, inaccurate flood maps, or still waiting for their Sandy claims appeals to be decided.

That is why I helped introduce the bipartisan SAFE NFIP Reauthoriza-
tion Act to fully authorize the program, cap premium rate increases, authorize funding for more flood map-
ping, reform the appeals process, and cap the compensation of flood insur-
ance companies. These are changes that we must pursue. The legislation we consider does none of this.

Mr. Speaker, we should be working together to comprehensively improve the NFIP. Doing anything less is an ab-
dication of our responsibility. I encourage all of my colleagues to oppose this legislation and work towards mean-

ingful flood insurance reform.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I con-
tinue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), a true expert on flood in-
surance issues.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk during this discussion about the flood insurance program, about making sure we are providing for the hurricane victims. There is talk about the FAA.

Let me be clear: we support the FAA. We support making sure that we pro-
vide all the resources necessary for the hurricane victims, from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Things are getting distorted is that this bill includes extraneous provisions that will actually undermine these very ob-
jectives.

I want to explain. Under the legislation that has been attached—the flood insurance legisla-
tion—it does allow private insurers to come in, which all of us support, but not in a vacuum. What is going to hap-
pen when you do this in a vacuum is that you are going to cause premiums to be diverted from the program.

This is the program where these people have been paying premiums for years, and the program is not going to have the resources to pay their claims, which means it is going to have to bor-
row more money, which is going to make the premiums go up even greater.

You are going to see the private in-
surers come in and cherry-pick low-
and moderate-risk policies, which is only going to leave the high-risk poli-
cies in the program trying to pay a debt and not having a diverse portfolio of low-, moderate-, and high-risk poli-
cies.

This is a flawed approach. It needs to be addressed on December 9, when this current program expires. We should be address-

ing this holistically.

I want to say it again. Those of you who have hurricane victims are under-
mining their very recovery by sup-
porting this legislation.

One of the other major flaws is this, Mr. Speaker. This shows flooding in Louisi-
a last year, flooding in Texas this year.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr.
DUFFY), chairman of the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee and a leader on flood insurance in the House today.

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment and thank Ms. CASTOR and Mr. Ross for their hard work on this legislation.

There are some here in this body who have said: if we let free markets into the National Flood Insurance Program that is run by the Federal Government, you are going to undermine the premiums that come into the national flood insurance pool.

It is $25 billion in debt and is structured in a way where premiums can’t rise. This doesn’t undermine the program.

What we are doing is saying: Listen, if you are in the National Flood Insurance Program right now, the way it is structured, there is only one place you can buy insurance. But this is a provision that will open up the market and let private companies come in and offer families better policies at better prices. If they don’t, you can stay in the NFIP. You don’t have to go private. You can stay government. But you give people choice.

It is like saying: Listen, you have to keep the United States Postal Service as your one carrier. You can’t have FedEx or UPS. You don’t get those choices.

People want a choice. In Houston, instead of having only 20 percent of the people who had coverage, you might have had 40, 50, or 60 percent of the people who would have had coverage. More people would have had protection.

I have got to tell you, I am disappointed in the partisanship.

I am going to quote a person I rarely quote, but a person I truly like. She once said in the process of this bill: “This is an example of real compromise.”

Then, on the substance of the bill, this fine woman from California said: “We can have the opportunity for our constituents to have some choice. I think that is real compromise, that is substantive compromise, that is meaningful compromise, and that is the kind of compromise that reasonable people can engage in.”

Mr. Speaker, that was the gentlewoman from California, who is now in opposition to this bill.

When this came up by itself—the same bill—last Congress, everyone voted for it. When it came up in committee, everyone voted for it. Democrats and Republicans voted for this bill because they knew that it was going to offer more choice and better prices to American families. That is why it was bipartisan.

I think this is a moment where our Congress can stand together on behalf of the American people who don’t have flood insurance, who don’t have a reasonably priced policy. Let’s stand with them today and pass the Ross-Castor bill. By the way, Ross and Castor, both from Florida. Two Florida Members, Republican and Democrat, came together.

Let’s get it done, Mr. Speaker. Mr. HENSRALING. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired. Pursuant to House Resolution 538, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended. Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of H.R. 3823 is postponed.

GOLD STAR MOTHERS

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

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our fellow Americans who know what it means to give the ultimate sacrifice to the Nation: our Gold Star families.

This past weekend, we observed National Gold Star Mothers and Families Day, a solemn reminder of our sacred obligation to hold dear in our heart and to never forget those in uniform who we have lost. Psalm 34 says: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

I believe this was on President Lincoln’s mind when he wrote to Mrs. Bixby, a mother who lost five of her sons in the Civil War. President Lincoln wrote: “I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only with the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have had so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.”

Like many in this Chamber, I have presented and saluted too many flag-draped coffins of our fallen warriors. As we remember them, let us also recommit ourselves to the task of caring for the families they leave behind who forever carry the pain of their loss. As they gave to the Nation, the Nation must give to them.

Today, I urge my colleagues to join me in renewing our obligations to our Gold Star families, a commitment for life.

National Preparedness Month

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

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, September is National Preparedness Month, and I rise today to offer prayers, condolences, and encouragement for those impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Also, I rise to thank the thousands of first responders, neighbors, and volunteers who have come out in droves to respond to these disasters. I stand with those residents now recovering from storm and flood damage as this Nation stands behind you ready to make you stronger and more resilient in the face of disaster. As a resident of a city that faced many disasters, I can attest to the fact that Americans across this Nation are resilient and only grow in strength in the face of a challenge.

In the wake of these disasters and as we remember the 16th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks and prepare to mark the fifth anniversary of Superstorm Sandy next month, we are reminded of the critical importance of preparing for the disasters that our communities may face. We cannot allow control over a disaster that will strike our communities, but we can take every opportunity to prepare ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities.

We are a resilient nation in the face of disasters. As a resident of Staten Island and chair of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, I urge all Americans to take time this month to make a plan, sign up for alerts and warnings in your area, check your insurance coverage, and make sure that you have an evacuation plan. We cannot plan on disasters ahead of time, but we can certainly prepare ourselves for when they come.

Polls Have Built-In Bias

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, both the Washington Examiner and Washington Times recently have reported on a practice that is resulting in overly low approval ratings for President Trump. Pollsters are not necessarily rigging their questions to get a desired result; instead, they are creating a biased result by how they select people to poll.

Frequently, the pollsters contact more Democrats than Republicans. Unsurprisingly, the results tilt anti-Trump. The Examiner pointed out that this “robs Trump of about 8 points in his approval ratings, from 46 percent to 38 percent.”

The Times noted that in polls including Presidential approval questions, the Economist relied on a sample that used 58 percent more Democrats than Republicans, which “gave Democrats a 14-point edge, while Reuters and Gallup gave Democrats an 11-point and 7-point edge in their samples.”

Mr. Speaker, as the 2016 election taught us, we shouldn’t rely on biased polls if we want accuracy.

September Is Suicide Prevention Month

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Mr. GAETZ. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, September is Suicide Prevention Month, a
time for our Nation to raise awareness about the recurring tragedy of suicide. This epidemic is too common for the men and women who wore our country’s uniform and put their lives on the line to defend our freedom. An estimated 22 percent of veterans and 250 percent higher amongst female veterans than females. This is unacceptable.

Twenty veterans a day lost to suicide should be a call to action for our country and for this Congress. We must take action, and we must do it now.

Typically, the time in this Chamber is split. Republicans have 1 hour and Democrats have 1 hour, but we believe this issue is too important to be overshadowed by partisan politics. That is why, tonight, Congressman Tim Murphy and I have brought together Members from both sides of the aisle to show our commitment to solving this problem together and finding real solutions for our veterans.

This is the fifth year that we have assembled this team to raise awareness and send a clear message that the epidemic of suicide must end. We have so much work left to do. So tonight we demonstrate our ongoing support for individuals, organizations, and agencies devoted to preventing the epidemic of veteran suicide. We challenge the VA, the Department of Defense, and our fellow lawmakers to do more.

We are failing in our obligation to do right by those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom.

Finally, we stand here tonight, united, for the military families who have experienced this tragedy, and we say to you: Your family’s loss is not forgotten. We work for the memory of your loved ones, and we will not rest until every veteran has access to the care he or she needs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Johnson), who understands the importance of addressing this epidemic, a colleague and friend of mine.

Thank you for being here this evening.

Mr. Johnson of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and giving me an opportunity to speak on such a critically important topic.

You served 26 years, Mr. Speaker, in the United States Air Force. I pinned Purple Hearts on the chests of some of my troops that had gone into harm’s way. I know the stress and strain on military families and on military members. I represent a district that is arguably one of the largest, if not the largest, veteran-populated districts in the State of Ohio, with nearly 50,000. And yet today, in 2017, we see 20 veterans per day, I every 72 minutes, committing suicide.

What does that say about us as a nation when we send our young people off in uniform to stand in harm’s way, to protect our freedoms, to protect our liberties, to protect our values and way of life, and then when they come home we can’t get them the help that they need when they are down?

One of the saddest days since I began serving the people of eastern and southern Ohio was the day I got a call from a young wife of a military member. She said she had been dealing with the VA for quite some time to get her husband an appointment with a mental health counselor, all to no avail. He’s not yet in, couldn’t get in, couldn’t get in.

I stopped by the VA center one day. I asked to speak to the director, gave the young man’s name, and I said: I would like to see the status of his appointment.

They looked him up in the system, and they said: Well, you will be happy to know, Congressman, that he has got an appointment next Wednesday.

I said: Well, I am actually here to tell you that you can cancel that appointment because he committed suicide last week.

He had been waiting for weeks and weeks and weeks to see to a mental health counselor, struggling with PTSD and the emotional and mental battle scars that came back with him from combat overseas. You know, it is one thing that we send our young people away to fight us on foreign soil. Imagine for a second what their families go through when they are gone day in and day out, not knowing if they are going to get that call or that knock at the door to tell them that their loved one has been injured or, worse, killed in action. And then we bring their loved one home, and they are helpless in terms of getting them the care and the treatment that they need.

I agree with my colleague: we need to do more. The agencies, the VA, the Department of Defense, mental health counselors all over the country, Congress, families, communities, we need to do more to help our veterans get back on their feet after they have participated in that inhumane, disastrous, catastrophic event known as war.

Mr. Speaker, it almost leaves you speechless to think about the millions of families that are impacted by this, 20 per day—20 per day. One per day is unacceptable, but yet we are seeing 20 per day.

I urge my colleagues and I urge our agencies in the Federal Government of the VA, the DoD—let’s get behind the VA effort, and let’s turn this trend in the opposite direction.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time to speak.

Ms. Sinema. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to Congressman Johnson. Not only is he an amazing Representative for the people of Ohio, he is also a veteran who served our country ably and proudly, and his story of a veteran in his district to suicide should be a call to all of us around the country to take care of the veterans in each of our districts.

We have made some progress since last year. I have often shared the story of a young veteran in my district, Sergeant Daniel Somers. Sergeant Somers was an Army veteran of two tours in Iraq. He served on Task Force Lightning, an intelligence unit. He ran over 400 combat missions as a machine gunner in the turret of a Humvee. Part of his role required him to interrogate dozens of terror suspects, and his work was deemed classified.

Like many veterans, Daniel was haunted by the war when he returned. He suffered from flashbacks, nightmares, depression, and additional symptoms of post-traumatic stress, made worse by a traumatic brain injury.

Daniel needed help. He and his family asked for help, but, unfortunately, the VA enrolled Sergeant Somers in group therapy sessions, which Sergeant Somers could not attend for fear of disclosing classified information. Despite requests for individualized counseling or some other reasonable accommodation to allow Sergeant Somers to receive appropriate care for his PTSD, the VA delayed providing Sergeant Somers with appropriate support and care.

Like many, Sergeant Somers’ isolation got worse when he transitioned to civilian life. He tried to provide for his family, but he was unable to work due to his disability.

Sergeant Somers struggled with the VA bureaucracy. His disability appeal had been pending in the system for over 2 years without resolution. Sergeant Somers didn’t get the help he needed in time.

On June 10 of 2013, Sergeant Somers wrote a letter to his family. In the letter he said: “I am not getting better. I am not going to get better, and I will most certainly deteriorate further as time goes on.”

He went on to say: “Thus, I am left with basically nothing. Too trapped in a war to be at peace, too damaged to be at war. Abandoned by those who would take the easy route, and a liability to those who stick it out—and, thus, deserve better. So you see, not only am I better off dead, but the world is better without me in it.”

This is what brought me to my actual final mission.”

We lost Sergeant Somers that day. No one who returns home from serving our country should ever feel like he or she has nowhere to turn. I am committed to working on both sides of the aisle to ensure that no veteran ever feels trapped like Sergeant Somers did, and that all of our veterans have access to appropriate mental healthcare.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. Murphy) a great addition to our Congress.

Mrs. Murphy of Florida. Mr. Speaker, September is Suicide Prevention...
Month, and I rise to bring awareness to the pressing issue of veteran suicide.

When our servicemembers go overseas, they bravely and selflessly risk their own lives for the greater good. But when they return home, our veterans face new adversities. Many are confronted by intense emotional distress, including depression and post-traumatic stress. Others struggle to readjust to civilian life or to reintegrate into their families and their social networks.

Unfortunately, too many veterans succumb to their mental anguish. America loses 20 Americans every day to suicide. It is time we step up and be there for them and provide them the support they deserve.

I encourage anyone who knows a veteran—whether a family member, a coworker, or a friend—to reach out. A simple gesture of kindness can make all the difference in the life of a veteran going through a difficult time.

I want in Congress fighting for more and better resources to support our veterans. Veterans fought for us. Now it is time we fight for them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) for his brief introduction. 

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT), who has served veterans bravely in Congress and in his district for many years.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. SINEMA for that very nice introduction. 

Ladies and gentlemen of the Nation who are listening or watching us on C-SPAN, I want to impress that we have exactly, right now, 40,000 soldiers—veterans—who are committing suicide each year.

This is a national crisis, but it is more than that. It is a national tragedy, but it is more than that. It is an American national shame.

These soldiers go where they are commanded to go. They go into a hail of bullets. They go and they fight and they die. They leave an arm, they leave a leg, they leave so much of themselves on the battlefield, and so many leave their minds there because of the devastation. And when we bring them back home, the level of treatment that many of them are getting, and even not getting, is, again, a national tragedy and a national shame.

It is my home that the plea that America was going to make during the summer, that Members of Congress will awaken us to what I believe is, and should be, the number one issue facing this Nation: take care of our veterans.

Twenty a day, 40,000 every year, is terrible.

Now, myself, what am I doing?

Each year, I put on a jobs fair. But I don't put on that jobs fair by myself. Partnering with me is the VA, where we have, in Atlanta, Georgia, at that convention and trades center, a jobs fair each year with the VA, and we are averaging about 450 jobs each year.

But we don't stop there. We have a health fair because it is the PTSD—post-traumatic stress syndrome—that is this archenemy that we are not examining. The reason for that is that there is a severe shortage of psychiatrists in the VA and there is a severe shortage of primary care physicians in the VA.

So right here in this legislature, my good Republican friend, LARRY BUCSHON from Indiana, and I—and he is a doctor—have worked together. We put together legislation 2 years ago, in 2015, for the special appropriations for veterans that we would pay the tuition, pay the loan forgiveness, for those physicians who are psychiatrists and who will go and work in the VA.

But we didn't stop there. Knowing how the vagarious income levels are structured and the pay scales are structured according to where you live in the United States—and we have VA hospitals, VA centers all over this country, and the salary levels vary—we made sure that an added incentive would be to those graduating psychiatrists who will go and help our veterans and go help us fulfill this shortage, that we would make sure that their incoming salary would be at least 2 percent higher than that average.

My friend the gentleman from Arizona for her dedication to helping veterans.

It will be often cited that 20 veterans a day take their own lives. It is important that we take a deeper dive into why that is because, as a society, we want to know.

There will be upwards of 40-some thousand suicides this year in our Nation. Even one is too many. And I know that organizations that deal with suicide prevention want to see that number drop considerably. But there is some understanding that is important for us to know what we can do and what stands in the way.

I want to note that those who serve in the military are about 1 percent of the population. Those who have served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam are dying off fast from natural causes. But a great many of those veterans who do take an act of suicide are above age 50. Many of them have never served in any capacity.

Characteristic groups, such as the Army National Guard and reservists are among those who do have some
higher rates. It has been interpreted that perhaps one of the reasons for that is that they do not stay with their cohorts after combat. They go back home, come back on weekends, but don't have that same day-to-day support.

We also know the military, very much so after Vietnam, when you were done with your time, when you got your points, you were gone.

\[1915\]

You could be in the middle of a battle, and you would be picked up by helicopter and taken home with encrusted blood still on your uniform from your friends, but you were sent back to the States—no chance to recover, no chance to develop from that, no chance to even get a checkup from the neck up, and, as a matter of fact, that was not even done. So for those who did serve in Vietnam and Korea and World War II, you just went back to life.

We have learned it is important to do more for people, and we do try and understand what is it, the characteristics among those who have taken their own lives, or tried to, that causes that to happen.

First of all, it is worth noting that about 70 percent of those who have taken their own lives were veterans who have not been involved with the VA hospital system. That is extremely important to know. They are not involved.

Now, that could be a number of reasons. It could be veterans who were not eligible for involvement at the VA. Many reservists and guards are not unless they served Active-Duty time, and even that is a limited timeframe. They also may have not been early identified when they came out of the military that would make them eligible for services. And, quite frankly, in many cases, it just is not near their home.

A study that was done with people at Fort Carson, Colorado, of 70-some folks who had attempted suicide, found that the number one reason that they gave, out of a list of 33 possibilities, was they wanted to end emotional distress. They simply wanted the pain to stop, and they ran out of ways to make it stop.

I reflect on the life of my father, who is now gone for other reasons, but one day when I was at home from college—and he himself was a World War II veteran—he called from the bathroom, and to see him there with a lot of blood on him, because he had just attempted to cut his arms and kill himself. Luckily, he did not. We got him care. But I believe for him, he certainly would have been in this category. He just wanted the pain to stop.

I don't think it was PTSD or his old signs of war. I think it was, perhaps, other distress as he dealt with his own alcoholism, or did not deal with it very well, and the many terrors of raising a family, and we just didn’t have money, but it was enough to affect me—lifetime—in terms of trying to understand and dedicate my life to helping those in psychological need.

I should mention, on September 11, I got my honorable discharge, so I am no longer in the Navy. I miss it every day, because I loved that time working with the reservists, with his brain injuries and post-traumatic stress and a wide range of other problems, but here are a few things that I learned from them that are very important.

One is, if you want care in mental health, you just can’t get it, not only because there may not be a VA near you, but even if there was, many persons who are dealing with panic and anxiety and depression don’t want to leave the house; many with post-traumatic stress disorders do not want to go onto a bus or into traffic or into congested areas, because that can bring back some terrible memories for them. The very thing they need is to get treatment, but the very problems they have prevent them from getting treatment.

Now, we have passed legislation here that deals with choice to allow veterans to get that care closer to home. But can they get it? Well, tragically, not just sadly—just tragically—in the area of mental health services, half the counties in America have no psychiatrist, they have no psychologist, they have no clinical social worker, they have no psychiatric nurse practitioner, and they have no licensed drug treatment counselor. In other words, it is not available.

If you just look at those, for example, with a substance abuse disorder, of the 22 million, about 75 to 80 percent of them also have a mental health problem and they are at higher risk for suicide. And certainly if we have a veteran who has substance abuse and depression, they are at higher risk.

But look at this group. For every 1,000 reservists who return with a substance abuse disorder—for every 1,000 people—900 do not seek treatment. Out of the 100 who do seek treatment, 37 have gotten nothing available to them. Of the 63 who have something available, only six get evidence-based care.

So it is no wonder when we talk to veterans, and they say, ‘‘I tried getting help, but this person didn’t understand. I couldn’t get help. It was a problem that was ongoing,’’ at some point they reach that point where they want to just end their emotional distress.

I remember visiting the house of a veteran. The mother had called me and said: “Can you help him? He won’t go to the VA. He won’t get help.”

I made a house call. The VA doesn’t do that, but I made a house call. And without revealing too much, I will just say that it was pretty clear he had a lot of medication around his house. His apartment was pretty unkempt, food lying around, bottles, dozens and dozens had been opened, each one from the VA, because probably each time he went to the VA, they said: “How are you doing?”

“I am not doing well.”

“Here. We will just increase your dosage,” or, “We will give you a different medication,” but the system was not set up to say, “How are you doing? What else can we do to care for you?”

I remember there was no way to pick him up when he was no longer employed, when he had isolated himself from society, when, like so many people, covered the windows of their bedroom with camouflage or something dark, but the light doesn’t get in, don’t watch TV, just stay away from the world, this shrinking world that constrains you like a snake around the throat until they see no more reason to live.

I remember going to the VA hospital and mentioning, “You know, I know the Marines are famous for not leaving anyone in the field. What do you do about some of these other folks with mental health problems?”

They said, “We don’t go out to their homes.”

I said, “Why not?”

“We just don’t do that.”

“Why not?”

“We just don’t.”

I agitated over that as being a Navy healthcare provider to know this doesn’t sound like the Marines. The Marines don’t leave someone out there.

Are we so constricted and tied up by rules that we can’t even go and reach out to them? But that is part of the problem, that we need easier access to local care, we need care that reaches out to veterans, and not just say, “Hey, listen, if you really want to get help, why don’t you suck it up, pull up your bootstraps and go out and get help,” because some of them are not able to do that yet.

Many of them feel, as a veteran, “I have faced tougher battles. I can’t let people know I am weak or I am struggling.”

Many of them have addiction disorders, and they don’t want people to know that they are weak and they are struggling.

To those veterans, I say this is not a sign of failure. It is like if you are in the battle and bullets are coming at you and grenades are coming at you and incoming fire is coming at you, the last thing you want to do is deny it is happening. You have to acknowledge it and say, “Here. We will just increase your dosage.”

If Congress really wants to help, we have to do more of that, but part of the
problem is this, too: they oftentimes, in the field, have such massive student loans. And relative to other areas of medicine and healthcare, they get paid so little, they may choose not to go into these areas of mental health care. So for some, they are the most vulnerable, we make it the most difficult for them to get care.

Add to that the idea of, who among those who are mental health providers actually have training and understanding of military healthcare, understanding of medicine, understanding military life?

I was commissioned 8 years ago, and I know that when I went on to officer school, and I went to training, you have got to learn a lot. The Marines say, “I learned to shoot a gun, and I can polish my shoes better than anybody,” but there is more to it than that. It is understanding the words, the acronyms, the lifestyle, what a person goes through.

We certainly do much better, if not just saying let’s hire people at the VA, but have a program for civilian mental health professionals, one, to recruit more; two, to pay for more reimbursed student loans to get them in the workforce; quite frankly, to give them a more regular orientation of what is like to be a member of the military. Let them observe boot camp. Let them understand this.

I will give you an example. Once a soldier who I was treating, he said he had given up getting care for a while. He said the third time he had to explain to his therapist what an MRAP was, he said, “Give it up.” The MRAP is a military vehicle, commonly known vehicle.

Now, every branch of the military has their own acronyms, and I don’t pretend to know them all, but if a person doesn’t even know the basics, you lose that sort of connection with the patient that you give up.

The other issue here is that we need to be able to have a system that monitors the medication closely. It is very common that if someone is on medication, they are a polypharmacy event, that is, they are taking so many medications, and then they will take other medications that counteract the effects of those medications, and then they may take other medications to deal with the side effects of those medications.

It was not uncommon for us at Walter Reed to have a patient on 8 or 10 or 15 or more meds that they were on. We found that we reduced them down to one or two.

But with medication comes weight gain, comes increase for diabetes, comes other problems, comes stressors in the family, comes situations where they are estranged from their spouse, difficulties with children, episodes with anger. They don’t like what they see happening through their employer, they wonder about their future, they may have taken poor medication, but sometimes they just give up.

There is a quote by author Steve Goodyear, who had quite an inspirational quote. I hope, Mr. Speaker, if there are veterans listening tonight, they take heart in it. Mr. Goodyear said: My scars remind me that I did indeed survive my deepest wounds. That in itself is an accomplishment. And they bring to mind something else too: they remind me that the daily life has inflicted on me harm, in many places, left me stronger and more resilient. What hurt me in the past has actually made me better equipped to face the present.

That is a message I want veterans to hear, that having moments of depression or anxiety or worry are as normal as feeling tired or hungry, but we know when you get in a downward spiral, it gets worse.

I don’t want veterans to give up. I don’t want veterans or members of the military feeling that they have so much emotional distress, this is the only way to end it.

I understand the feeling, but I also know that, as members of the community and members who are veterans, we wrap our arms around those veterans to say there is help out there, and we as Congress Members have an obligation to make sure we are providing those services.

It pains me when I think that sometimes we are still up with funding for all sorts of programs, but for this 1 percent who say, “I am willing to take a bullet for you, I am willing to die to defend my country, its Constitution, and its flag,” we as Congress ought to be able to say we are willing to put some money in to help you get more services.

Also some advice for those veterans who may be listening: It is extremely important to follow a few guidelines in your lifestyle, besides not giving up, but physical fitness that you were forced to do in the military and boot camp, and all those pushups and sit-ups and running and pullups we did, they had a reason; because when you stay physically fit, it affects your brain functioning and it improves it, and it is one of the things that is used to fight off depression and other problems.

Two, you have to have an attitude that is focused on positive things. You call in help. We don’t need dead heroes on the battlefield. We certainly don’t need them in the streets or the homes. We need people who are saying: Understand, that even though it may be tough to get help, there is help out there. There is help out there. People want to facilitate and help you get better.

I don’t want anybody to feel that this is the way to end emotional distress. It is a permanent solution to a temporary problem, and even if that problem seems to have been going on for years, I know people can and do get better. I have seen it time and time again. The soldier or veterans that thought: I can’t go on; I have to give up. They can turn that life around and become a contributor.

One has a few choices. One can be a victim and say: You know what? I am under this giant boulder. I will never get better. The weight is too great. I am too weak. I cannot move on. There’s no hope.

Or you can move on to another stage and say: I am going to be a survivor.

On the first point, you say: I am helpless because of what is happening. When you are a survivor, you say: You know what? I am going to move on despite what is happening. I will pray more. I will engage more. I will do greater factor with post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and depression than anything else, and a big part of this is just getting enough sleep.

Members of Congress, we deal with this a lot in terms of our own hectic lifestyle, and take know many constitu-
more. But every day I will wake up and commit more to get through that day to do something that is important and meaningful. I don’t need to set up a goal of 10 years from now, but let me get through that day. Let me find some things to sing and focus. It is extremely important.

But beyond that, beyond being a victim or a survivor, is a third stage, and that is being a thriver, someone who says: I am going to make sense out of what happened, and it is going to make me a stronger person.

What I said here in the quote from Steve Goodier where he says, “What hurt me in the past has actually made me better. Month by month I face the present.” If I am in a tough situation, if I am in a situation where I, myself, look at it and I have despair and I lack hope for my own future and I turn towards someone, give me someone who has been there, will help you, give me a veteran. Give me a soldier who understands boot camp and what is it like to be yelled at and lack sleep. Give me a veteran who has been on the battlefield. Give me someone who has been out there to understand what it is like to be months without seeing your family. Give me someone who has been there and says: I made it; so can you.

I want veterans to have that sort of hope. We have our obligations in Congress to make sure that everyone has health benefits to every single veteran, to do in our Nation is provide mental health services, certainly in their life. We have our obligations in Congress to make sure we have the resources in place so that those veterans receive the services that they need on a timely basis, especially when they are in crisis, to make it as easy as possible for them to navigate the bureaucracy and get the help that they need.

Additionally, we need to make sure that those veterans who are not currently enrolled for veterans services and veterans benefits are made eligible for mental health services, certainly in crisis conditions, so that when someone reaches out to them, they are embraced with the loving arms of their country, as manifest in the VA, and they are brought in and cared for and helped to navigate through that crisis in their life.

There will be talk about how much it is going to cost. There will be a challenge as to whether or not we can afford to take care of these men and women who have served our country and are now facing this crisis in their life.

But I would guarantee you that any American in this country would say that we have to expend any cost for every veteran benefit, there is no higher obligation in this Nation than taking care of these men and women who have worn our uniform, no greater obligation in this country. We can never forget the vet.

Thank you for partnering with me on this important effort this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from New York, Thomas SUOZZI, who serves on the Armed Services Committee and has been a great addition to our caucus this year.

Thank you for joining us.

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking Congresswoman SINEMA and Congressman MURPHY and all of my Democratic and Republican colleagues for trying to bring attention to this very important issue.

I also want to thank Secretary Shulkin, who has announced his Get to Zero initiative to try and address this problem of 20 veterans every day committing suicide in our country.

Just today, as on many days, I saw a veteran who had lost both of his legs. It is common here in Washington, D.C., but it is common throughout every city and every town throughout our country that we see more and more veterans who have injuries. After 16 years at war, there are more and more veterans in our country who have been disabled.

With 20 veterans committing suicide every day, we know, however, that there are many injuries that we cannot see, injuries that veterans carry around by themselves at home, alone, in the dark of night, with nothing but their pain.

As Congressman MURPHY pointed out, 70 percent of the veterans of the 20 per day that commit suicide in our Nation—70 percent, 14 of the 20—do not have access to veterans benefits at the current time and do not utilize those services.

In fact, in our Nation today, there are 21 million veterans, approximately, and of those 21 million veterans, only 7 million have access to veterans benefits.

I have introduced a bipartisan bill, H.R. 2736, to suggest that what we need to do in our Nation is provide mental health benefits to every single veteran in our country, regardless of whether they were Active Duty, whether they were in the National Guard or in the Reserves, whether they were honorable discharged or less than honorably discharged. It is estimated that, since 2009, there have been 22,000 veterans with mental health have received other than honorable discharges. Arguably, most of those discharges were because of the same mental illness that they now carry around with them today.

Think of a veteran who is in crisis, a veteran who is contemplating suicide, a veteran who, as Congressman Murphy described, is at the end of their rope and feels that there is no help and the only way to escape their pain is to commit suicide. Think of that veteran who reaches out for help at the VA.

Could you imagine going through the bureaucracy to figure out whether or not you were even eligible for services if you weren’t currently enrolled? You are seeking help, you are in the middle of a crisis, and you have got to fill out a form. You have got to determine whether or not you meet the criteria.

I am an attorney and a certified public accountant and a Member of the United States Congress. I read the requirements, and I couldn’t figure them out. We need to make it much easier for anyone who has ever worn a uniform in any capacity whatsoever: in battles that we won, in battles that we lost, whether they worked on a truck, whether they were Active Duty, whether they were Reserve, whether they were in the National Guard. Every veteran should have access to mental health services during a crisis. We have to make it much simpler.

We heard a story tonight from Congresswoman JOHNSON, who talked about a veteran who was trying to get an appointment to get mental health services. And he was told by the VA that the veteran had already committed suicide.

So we have got a couple obligations. I believe, Number one is for those veterans who are currently utilizing VA services. We have to make sure we have the resources in place so that those veterans receive the services that they need on a timely basis, especially when they are in crisis, to make it as easy as possible for them to navigate the bureaucracy and get the help that they need.

Additionally, we need to make sure that those veterans who are not currently enrolled for veterans services and veterans benefits are made eligible for mental health services, certainly in crisis conditions, so that when someone reaches out to them, they are embraced with the loving arms of their country, as manifest in the VA, and they are brought in and cared for and helped to navigate through that crisis in their life.

There will be talk about how much it is going to cost. There will be a challenge as to whether or not we can afford to take care of these men and women who have served our country and are now facing this crisis in their life.

But I would guarantee you that any American in this country would say that we have to expend every cost for every veteran benefit, there is no higher obligation in this Nation than taking care of these men and women who have served our country, our uniform, our greater obligation in this country. We can never forget the vet.
to this very serious crisis in our country.

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you so much. Congressman SUOZZI, for your commitment to taking care of veterans in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from California, Congresswoman JULIA BROWNLEY.

Congressman JULIA BROWNLEY has served on the Veterans Committee for 5 years now and is the ranking member on the Health Subcommittee for Veterans. She has been doing a yeoman’s amount of work to help ensure that our veterans get the care they need when they return home.

Congresswoman, thank you for joining us again.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. I thank the gentlewoman from Arizona for yielding to me and for organizing this Special Order hour and bringing attention to this very, very important topic.

Mr. Speaker, we are here today, both Republicans and Democrats, because addressing this epidemic of veteran suicide is the highest priority for Members of both parties.

Congressman SUOZZI talked about the fact that Dr. Shulkin, the VA Secretary, has made this his top clinical priority; and by shining a clear light on this topic, I hope we can finally reduce the stigma around mental health issues and be clear about the significant work that still needs to be done to address this devastating epidemic.

We need to do more because 20 veterans commit suicide each day, veterans like Sara Leatherman and Linda Raney and Katie Lynn Cesena. As Congresswoman Murphy already pointed out, it is also estimated that only 6 of those 20 veterans were receiving VA services.

The VA provides some of the most comprehensive mental healthcare and resources in the Nation, and we need to encourage more veterans to seek care that is available, and we must be ready for them.

We do need more providers, and I support Congressman MURPHY and Congressman SCOTT and others who are advocating for more providers within the VA.

But, unfortunately, whether it is a lack of providers, long wait times, or not enough resources devoted to outreach, we face a serious issue with getting veterans set up with the care that they need. The VA took an important step forward earlier this year by expanding access to its mental healthcare for veterans with lighter than honorable discharges. That was the right thing to do and the right step, but much more must be done.

One important component of reducing veteran suicide is to better understand which programs have been most successful. The Clay Hunt Act and my bill, the Female Veteran Suicide Prevention Act, provide for an independent analysis of the VA’s suicide prevention and mental health programs to find out what works.

It is critical to break this data up based on gender because, tragically, recent VA data indicates that women veterans are 2½ times more likely to take their own lives than civilian women. Actually, that is a better statistic. Last year, it was 6 times more than civilian women. But the reason why that has been reduced, tragically, is because the number of suicides amongst civilian women has increased.

As the population of female veterans continues to grow, the VA needs to recognize their unique experiences and provide the quality healthcare that will address this suicide epidemic. It is clear that women on the battlefield experience the same kind of trauma that men experience on the battlefield, and that may be a very similar experience, but we know that women’s experience in the military serving our country can be very, very different, and we need to understand how to best to treat both women and men.

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In closing, please let me remind veterans and those who love them that the VA operates a confidential call line that is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please call. If veterans are listening tonight, please call and have the courage to, if you need that support, make that call your first step. And any veteran and any family member can call.

That phone number is 1–800–273–8255, and then you press number 1. You can also send a text message at 838255. Please, please, if you are in need, please reach out and make this call.

Please know that we are here for you. We are fighting for you. Give us a chance to help you.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman BROWNLEY for her dedication not just to this event every year, but to taking care of veterans at home and here in Washington.

I thank all the advocates from both parties who joined us this evening. Our thoughts are with all the families who have lost a loved one to suicide. But our efforts to end veterans’ suicide do not end today or even this month. We are committed to continuing this fight to ensure that our veterans always know that they have a place to turn.

We can do more. We need a VA that provides meaningful help to veterans in need; a VA that puts veterans first and works aggressively with community providers to improve the quality and accessibility of care. We need a VA that is transparent and open to restore the trust and credibility it has lost. The VA can and must do better.

No one deserves our gratitude and respect more than those who put their lives on the line for our freedom. And when the VA fails, our heroes suffer.

I would like to take one liberty before closing. This is a blessing.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to make one point. That one point is that a President need not be convicted of a criminal offense to be impeached; in fact, need not be charged with a criminal offense; need not be charged with a statutory offense; need not be charged with a codified offense to be impeached.

But before I make this point, Mr. Speaker, I have to acknowledge that I am always in awe of this well, and I don’t take for granted this great opportunity that has been accorded me to stand in the well of the Congress of the United States of America. I believe that those of us who have been so blessed should acknowledge our blessings. This is a blessing.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people who don’t have this opportunity, so I am going to take one liberty before going into my message. I just want people to know what I see as I stand here in the well of the Congress of the United States of America.

As I look forward, Mr. Speaker, I would have those who have not had the opportunity to stand here to know that there is above the doors at the second level a depiction of Moses the Lawgiver.

I would have people know, Mr. Speaker, that behind me, of course, is the flag of the United States of America.

And I would have persons know, Mr. Speaker, that we have these two podiums, and that, typically, Democrats
will occupy this side and Republicans the other. We can go to either side. There is no requirement that I stand where I am standing. I can stand at many other places in this room.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want people to know that this is a special place and I am honored to have the opportunity to stand here tonight and to speak to the issue of a President not having the necessity of committing a crime to be impeached. There is no requirement that a crime be committed. There is no requirement that a statutory offense be violated.

Let’s take, for a moment, a look through the vista of time. Let us go back to the Constitutional Convention, and let us hear now the words of George Mason. George Mason reminded his colleagues that no one should be above justice. His words were: “Shall any man be above justice?”

They had good reason to give consideration to this, Mr. Speaker. They had good reason because the President was probably the most powerful person in the country. The President would be the most powerful person in the country. The President is the Commander in Chief of the military. The President has the awesome power to pardon anyone, saving himself.

So the question becomes: How do you remove a President from office? This is what they had to grapple with. And, of course, they considered a judicial process. They considered persons who might be a part of a jury. They considered these things.

The Federalist Papers, if you would care to read, will give you a rendition of what their thoughts were. Start with Federalist Paper No. 65.

But they considered these things, and they concluded that the process should not be judicial. They concluded that if a President is to be removed from office, it should be by persons who are in the political arena. They concluded that this should be something that would be, in fact, political, not judicial. They concluded that a President need not commit a crime to be removed.

I am emphasizing this, my dear friends, because there is a lot of confusion about this question. And if you would care to read something that could summarize what I am saying, you might look at an article that was written by a person with the Cato Institute, Gene Healy, August 7, 2017, styled “The Overcriminalization of Impeachment.” I would commend it to you. Please read it if you want to read a good summary of what impeachment is all about.

So they had to grapple with this question, and they concluded that it would be a political one, not a judicial question. And in so doing, in concluding that it would be a political one, they incorporated into the Constitution Article II, section 4—Article II, section 4 of the Constitution—that addresses the question of impeachment.

And in so point after the codification and ratification of the Constitution, there was a person to be impeached. The first person was a Federal judge, Judge John Pickering. Judge Pickering was not accused of committing a crime. There was not an allegation that he committed a crime.

If you read the Articles of Impeachment, you will find that Judge Pickering, once he was convicted, was convicted, generally speaking, for having loose morals and intemperate habits, not a crime. But the questions dealt with morality.

Shall any man be above justice?

Not above the law. The law codified. Justice carries with it a certain amount of morality.

Shall any man—and today I would say “any person”—be above justice? Shall any person be above justice?

The Framers of the Constitution concluded that Article II, section 4 would address it, themselves—a good many of them—were there when the first person was impeached in 1804, Judge John Pickering.

So for those of you who are believers in the original intent, the best way to ascertain the intent of the Framers would be to look at what the Framers did when they had the opportunity.

What did Madison do?

Madison, the father of the Constitution, it is said, and other Framers who were actually there when Article II, section 4 was put in place, found that Judge Pickering, who committed no crime or no allegation of a crime being committed, with reference to his impeachment, was impeached because of moral reasons and an intemperate habit or habits.

Mr. Speaker, I mention these things because it is important for us to understand that we have made a mistake. We have made a mistake in that we have outsourced—this is from Gene Healy, by the way—the responsibility of investigating the acts of a President to the executive branch itself.

Think for just a moment, dear friends. The impeachment is an arm of the executive branch. We in Congress have outsourced the investigation to the executive branch by and through the Justice Department.

Mr. Speaker, that can give the appearance of impropriety. We live in a world where it is not enough for things to be right; they must also look right. It could look to some like that outsourcing has created a circumstance by which the chief executive, the President, could influence the Attorney General. That is the way it could look.

But, Mr. Speaker, that is not what the intent is that we have in the Constitution, Article II, section 4. That is not the intent. The intent was for the Judiciary Committee in the Congress of the United States of America to investigate. That is where the power to investigate lies, because it is for impeachment.

If we are outsourcing it to the executive branch, such that the Justice Department might perform dysfunction, we give the appearance that impeachment requires the commission of a crime, because that is what the Justice Department is looking for, not morality. The Justice Department wants to know what crime was committed, under what circumstances.

And too many people believe that if the Justice Department does not find that a crime was committed, then there is no impeachable offense. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker.

Regardless as to what a Justice Department concludes, regardless as to whether a good lawyer would bring charges by way of something from what the Justice Department concludes, the Congress of the United States of America still has the power, the ability, the power to impeach, notwithstanding any finding of a Justice Department, notwithstanding any conclusions of the Justice Department, because it is not the responsibility of the Justice Department to investigate and then pass it on to the Congress with some recommendation. That is not their responsibility. That is the Judiciary Committee and the Congress of the United States of America.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have given this false impression that somehow there must be an offense committed. But, Mr. Speaker, I assure you that it is not the case, and the evidence is there for those who care to read the article that I have called to your attention. It is a short read.

Or if you care to read the Federalist Papers, Federalist Paper No. 65, you can read some of the conclusions that Madison and others have presented.

This is something that is important to this country. So I am standing here in the well of the House tonight to make one point, a place that I am in great awe of, a place that I consider sacred. I am standing here in the well of the House tonight to make the point that a President need not commit a crime to be removed from office. A statute that is impeached. Impeachment belongs in one place, and one place only, and that is right here where I stand now, in the House of Representatives.

If the House of Representatives, upon receiving articles of impeachment, should vote to impeach, that means that a President would be indicted. It does not mean that the President—the 218 votes, assuming all persons in the House are present. It doesn’t mean that the President is going to be removed from office.

Impeachment does not mean removal from office. Impeachment means that
the President must now face a trial in
the Senate, to be presided over by the
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of
the United States of America. That is
what impeachment does. It moves it
along.
And, by the way, there is no require-
ment that you assure anyone that you
can get the votes necessary to impeach
to bring an impeachment before the
House. A privileged resolution to im-
peach does not necessitate your being
able to prove before you present it that
you are not going to prevail with it. That
is not the case.
If you can think of it in terms of the
real world, while this is real—we say
that term loosely, I assure you. If you
think in terms of the world beyond
these walls where a person might be in-
dicted, in this country, every day, peo-
ple are indicted who are not convicted.
So impeachment is not tantamount to
conviction. Impeachment merely
means that there is reason now for the
Senate to follow this cause.

The Senate, upon taking up the
cause, can find the President not guilty
or guilty. If the President is found
guilty, the President is removed from
office. There is no other punishment.
The President is removed from office.
After the President is removed from
office, if the Justice Department or some
other agency, some other arm of the
government concludes that the Presi-
dent has committed a criminal offense,
then a President would be prosecuted.

Now, there is some debate amongst
some constitutional scholars as to
whether or not a President can be pro-
escuted while the President still holds
office. I think most of them would
agree that it would happen after the
President leaves office, but that is a
debate that I don't care to enter.
My point is the President would be
removed from office. Now, that is im-
portant to consider because removal
from office, without punishment—Crimi-
nal acts have punishment upon convic-
tion. The President is not punished.
The President is removed from office.
That is not considered punishment.
The President does not face punish-
ment upon being convicted of impeach-
ment. The President is removed from
office.
Now, that, in and of itself, is not
something that I believe we should
take lightly. I think it is serious, but it
is not a punishment.
For those of you who may just be
joining us for this statement that I am
making tonight, I have taken this pos-
tion tonight in the well of the Congress
of the United States of America for one
reason: to make the point that a Presi-
dent need not be charged with a crimi-
ナル offense—not N-O-T, charged with a
criminal offense.
I close with this. The Framers, very
much concerned about a runaway
President, runaway Presidency, very
much concerned about the awesome
amount of power that they were ac-
cording one person: the power to be
commander of all of the Armed Forces;
the power to send persons into battle;
the power to send people, literally, in
harm's way such that many might not
return; the power to impeach, nearly
with impunity—not with absolute im-

mony but nearly with impunity. There are some opportunities for the
President to provide a person not with
impeachment, but with exoneration for
a crime, and that President could be
impeached for the way that exoner-
tation took place, depending on the rela-
tionship that the person had with the
President.

But the point is impeachment is
there because it is an awesome power
that we have given the President; and
because we have given the President
this awesome power, it is important
that we have a check on the President
that does not require the commis-
on of a crime.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the gen-
erosity of this Special Order. I thank
the leadership as much, and I yield
back the balance of my time.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following
titles were taken from the Speaker's
table and, under the rule, referred as
follows:
S. 870. An act to amend title XVIII of the
Social Security Act to implement Medicare
payment policies designed to improve man-
agement of chronic disease, streamline care
coordination, and improve quality outcomes
without adding to the deficit; to the Com-
mittee on Ways and Means; in addition, to
the Committee on Energy and Commerce
for a period to be subsequently determined by
the Speaker, in each case for consideration
of such provisions not within the jurisdic-
tion of the committee concerned.
S. 1028. An act to provide for the estab-
ishment and maintenance of a Family
Caregiving Strategy, and for other purposes;
to the Committee on Education and the
Workforce.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to
an enrolled bill of the Senate of the fol-
lowing title:
S. 810. An act to facilitate construction of
a bridge on certain property in Christian
County, Missouri, and for other purposes.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE
PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House,
reported that on September 26, 2017,
she presented to the President of the
United States, for his approval, the fol-
lowing bill:
H.R. 3110. To amend the Financial Sta-

bility Act of 2010 to modify the term of the
independent member of the Financial Sta-

bility Oversight Council.

PROCEEDINGS OF FORMER
MEMBERS PROGRAM

The proceedings held before the
House convened for legislative business
are as follows:

UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEM-
BERS OF CONGRESS 2017 ANNUAL REPORT TO
CONGRESS

The meeting was called to order by
the Honorable Martin Frost, vice presi-
dent of the United States Association
of Former Members of Congress, at 8 a.m.

PRAYER

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

Lord God of history, we thank You
for this day when former Members re-
turn to Congress to continue in a less
official manner their service to our Na-
tion and to this noble institution.


May their presence here bring a mo-
ment of pause where current Members
consider the profiles they now form for
future generations of Americans.

May all former Members be rewarded
for their contributions to this constitu-
tional Republic and continue to work
and pray that the goodness and justice
of this beloved country be proclaimed
to the nations.

Bless all former Members who have
died since last year's meeting, 33 in all.
May their families and their constitu-
ents be comforted during a time of
mourning and forever know our grati-
tude for the sacrifices made in service
to the House.

Finally, bless those here gathered
that they might bring joy and hope to
the present age and supportive com-
panionship to one another. Together,
we call upon Your Holy Name now and
forever.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable Martin Frost led the
Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

Mr. FROST. The Chair now recog-
nizes the president of the United States
Association of Former Members of
Congress, the Honorable Cliff Stearns
from Florida, to address the Members.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker and Fa-
ther, thank you for those very welcome
comments. I think all of us, when we
come on the House floor, we feel keenly
the fact of this beloved country and
America with which we respect our posi-
tions as former Members of Congress.

Thank you, Martin. It is always a
distinct privilege to be back in this re-
vered Chamber and to see so many of
my good friends and former colleagues
here. On behalf of the United States
Association of Former Members of
Congress, I appreciate the Speaker's in-
vitation to return to this wonderful
place and to present to the Congress

September 27, 2017
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE
H7575
Former Members of Congress’ 47th annual report.

I will be joined by some of our colleagues in reporting on the activities, finances, and projects of our organization since our last report a little over a year ago. But first I would like to ask the Clerk to call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll and the following former Members answered “present”:

Mr. Alexander of Arkansas
Mr. Babin of Louisiana
Ms. Christensen of the Virgin Islands
Mr. Coyne of Pennsylvania
Mr. DiGuaard of New York
Mr. Edwards of Texas
Mr. Frost of Texas
Mr. Gerlach of Pennsylvania
Mr. Glickman of Kansas
Mr. Hertel of Michigan
Mr. Hochbrueckner of New York
Mr. Horsford of Nevada
Mr. Konny of California
Mr. Lancaster of North Carolina
Mr. Lungren of California
Mr. Maffei of New York
Ms. Morella of Maryland
Mr. Rahall of West Virginia
Mr. Roth of Wisconsin
Mr. Sarasin of Connecticut
Mr. Sargent of Texas
Mr. Skaggs of Colorado
Mr. Slattery of Kansas
Mr. Stearns of Florida
Mr. Tanner of Tennessee
Mr. Taylor of Ohio
Mr. Walsh of New York
Mr. Weller of Illinois
Mr. Zelliff of New Hampshire

Mr. FROST. The Chair announces that 29 former Members of Congress have responded to their names.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Frost, thank you very much, and I would also indicate the former members of the European Union are all accounted for and present here, and we welcome all of them here especially: I want to thank all of you for joining us today. As I prepare for today’s report, I want to give you a little quote from Aristotle that goes back 2,500 years. He was asked: What would be the best form of life one could live? He replied that: “The best form of life, the Eudaimonia outcome, given all that, would be the life of the good lawgiver.”

He didn’t mention the richest person, nor the most spiritual man, but the legislator. For all of us, service in this Chamber is the pinnacle of our professional lives, and I am very proud that through the Former Members of Congress we can continue, in a very small measure, the public service that brought us here to Congress in the first place.

My colleagues, our Association was chartered by Congress, and one requirement of that congressional charter is for us to report once a year to Congress about our activities.

Incidentally, in 2016, there were approximately 1.3 million non-profit organizations in the United States. Of that number, right around 100 are congressionally chartered, and those include such outstanding organizations as the USO and the Boy and Girl Scouts of America. Former Members of Congress, therefore, is in very exclusive and prestigious company, and we take the mandate that comes with being congressionally chartered very seriously.

Our Association was founded in 1970 and chartered by Congress in 1983. It is a bipartisan, nonprofit, voluntary alliance of former United States Senators and Members of Congress standing for America’s constitutional system, which vests authority in the people through their elected offices.

We work together to strengthen Congress in the conduct of its constitutional responsibility through promoting a collaborative approach to policymaking. We seek to deepen the understanding of our democratic system, domestically and internationally, and to encourage the citizenry through civic education about Congress and the importance of public service.

We are successful because Democrats and Republicans work together in a partnership for all of our programs and our many projects, including participation with current Members of Congress.

Our Association has been chartered by Congress, and we are equally proud that absolutely no taxpayer dollar is earmarked or expended to make all of our programs possible. Everything we do, and you will hear about many of our programs in a short while, is financed via grants and sponsors, our membership dues, and our annual fundraising gala. Our finances are sound, our projects are fully funded, and our most recent annual audit by an outside accountant confirmed that we are running the Former Members of Congress in a very fiscally sound, responsible, and transparent manner.

We are successful because former Senators and Representatives come together for the good of our organization. They all believe in our mission, and they continue to have the public servant’s spirit at heart.

Former Members of Congress, in 2016, donated over 6,500 hours of energy, wisdom, mentoring, and expertise. All of these activities were donated pro bono. No former Member received any kind of honorarium to go on a Congress to Campus visit or participate in any Former Members of Congress’ programs. Your only remuneration is the knowledge that back when you served in Congress was a unique privilege, and that it comes with a mandate to teach the next generation.

Before I report on specific activities, as your Association’s president, I want to thank all the Members who have contributed their time and expertise to make our organization such a success. So on behalf of the Former Members of Congress, thank you wholeheartedly for your participation.

Many of you have joined us for several years on this occasion. There will be numerous programs and projects which, by now, you have become quite familiar with. This is a sign of the Former Members of Congress’ stability and purpose. We are extremely proud of our 50-year history of creating lasting and impactful programs that teach about Congress and representative government, and our ability to take long-term goals and expand them and improve upon them.

In addition to hearing about programs we have conducted for many years, you will hear from us about a new vision we have for this organization. For over a year now, our Association has engaged in a very detailed, in-depth strategic planning process which has set us off for a very exciting path.

This process was led by a strategic planning professional who has worked in this field for decades, has written extensively on management and organizational success, and has served clients, including many Fortune 100 companies. His name is Mark Sobol, and he made the time, service, Longwave Partners, available to us pro bono, because he so strongly believes in our former Members organization, that it can play an integral and impactful role in reconnecting citizens with their government, and reassuring that public servants, no matter what the party label is, are eager to work together for the good of this country.

Our work with Mark and Longwave included our board of directors, countless former Members of Congress, our excellent staff, and numerous other stakeholders. It resulted in a vision for Former Members of Congress that outlines the next 3 to 5 years and, as its core, four strategic principles: We will provide forums for dialogue that will strengthen bipartisan relationships here on Capitol Hill; we will become recognized nationwide as an unparalleled resource for the United States Congress; we will be a champion for public service and an advocate on behalf of Congress; and we will create internal mechanisms for maximum impact.

Sincerely, I want to thank Mark for his invaluable leadership on this transitional, transformative undertaking, and I also want to thank my colleagues for being so engaged in this exciting progress.

I include the Former Members of Congress strategic plan for the record.

THE UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

(Cliff Stearns, President; Martin Frost, Vice President; Tim Petri, Secretary; Karen Thurman, Treasurer; Barbara Kennelly, Past President)

INTRODUCTION

We are engaged in a strategic planning process to deepen the impact and shape of the future of the US Association of Former Members of Congress—FMC. We continue to believe that the current political climate and dysfunction is preventing Congress from functioning at its highest possible level. This condition has complicated FMC, a Congressionally chartered 501(c)(3) non-profit, to re-examine its mission and the opportunities that will deepen the positive contribution we are making toward a more civil
and productive political discourse in our nation.

With the input of a bipartisan group of more than twenty former Members over the summer, as well as staff and “friends of FMC,” we convened meetings in the fall of 2016 and early January 2017 to create a mission and strategic themes for FMC that would serve us, standing for America’s Constitutional system, which vests authority in the people through their elected representatives.

FMC: Seeking to strengthen the Congress in the conduct of its Constitutional responsibility through promoting a collaborative approach to policy making.

FMC: Working to strengthen the Congress and programming into consistent and recognizable group programs in a more co-operative way.

MISISON STATEMENT

FMC is a bipartisan, nonprofit, voluntary alliance of former United States Senators and Representatives for America’s Constitutional system, which vests authority in the people through their elected representatives.

FMC: Working to strengthen the Congress in the conduct of its Constitutional responsibility through promoting a collaborative approach to policy making.

FMC: Seeking to deepen the understanding of our democratic system, domestically and internationally, and to encourage the citizenry through civic education about Congress and political participation.

THE 3 STRATEGIC THEMES DEVELOPED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS, SENIOR STAFF AND OTHER STAKERS:

1) Embrace the whole “Congressional Family”
2) Collaborative Partnerships
3) Community Outreach and Programming
4) Showcase Good Governance
5) Build our Brand
6) Elevate and Enhance Media Presence
7) Working Together for Congressional Success
8) Celebrate Bipartisanship
9) Build Bipartisan Relationships

THE 4 CORE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED BY STAFF TO TRANSLATE FMC’S MISSION INTO ACTION:

1) Provide forums for dialogue that build and strengthen relationships in support of a healthy representative democracy.
2) Elevate and streamline our brand so that our accumulated wisdom and convening power are a reputable and unparalleled resource on the U.S. Congress.
3) Be a champion for public service that is inclusive and cross-partisan.
4) Develop FMC for maximum impact and efficiency.

CORE STRATEGY 1: PROVIDE FORUMS FOR DIALOGUE THAT BUILD AND STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS IN SUPPORT OF A HEALTHY REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Purpose: Strengthen and expand existing programs that build across-the-aisle relationships for current Members of Congress as well as Congressional staff; showcase good governance that is based upon bipartisanship and civility; re-connect citizens with their representative democracy by bringing Congress back to the community.

Specific Actions:

1. Programming. Redefine programming portfolio to fall into easily recognizable categories, for example group all exchange programs, group all Capitol Hill programs, group all non-DC programs rather than current list by region.
2. Build partnerships with like-minded organizations that offer programs which align with FMC’s mission.
3. Streamline staff responsibilities and portfolios to group programs in a more coherent way.
4. Expand Congress to Campus model to other constituencies by marketing events better, incorporating social media and modern technology such as an updated website, and using modern technology to keep constituents involved.
5. Make more concerted effort to have Statesmanship Awards Dinner celebrate true bipartisanship and build cohesive year-round programming around event theme.
6. Increase public service element of annual and regional meetings by incorporating FMC’s programming into our own membership in a more compelling and cohesive way, which will also aid in recruiting FMCs to be more active.
7. Expand partnerships and ability to keep constituents involved following a program by building a cohesive schedule of events so that participants from one event can continue their interaction with former Members via a follow up event, for example a Congress to Campus visit is followed up by a webinar.
8. Find ways to incorporate technology into every aspect of FMC events, from marketing to registration, from tweets during event to creating platforms for follow up.

CORE STRATEGY 2: ELALYATE AND STREAMLINE OUR BRAND SO THAT OUR ACCUMULATED WISDOM AND CONSENSUS IS RECOGNIZED AS A REPUTABLE AND UNPARALLELED RESOURCE ON THE U.S. CONGRESS

Purpose: Vastly expand our reach and our impact; be an integral part of the Congress and on behalf of the value of public service; unify our leadership, membership and staff behind FMC’s core message.

Specific Actions:

1. Brand Identity. Unity and elevate FMC brand and marketing materials, both internal and external.
2. Create consistent, unified visual brand for all FMC artwork, logos, letterhead, etc.
3. Create unique events and train everyone, including board and staff, to communicate the same points about FMC.
4. Develop cohesive schedule of events with same theme.
5. Website. Have a more modern, dynamic and interactive site that better tells our story and is a more effective tool for staff.
6. Redesign current site.
7. Drive social media traffic to website and vice versa.
8. Make better use of partners and like-minded entities to build cohesive and comprehensive programming.
   1) When appropriate, invite media to FMC events.
   2) Train and deploy FMC board and senior staff to be issue experts and a resource for national, regional, and local media, while also telling FMC’s compelling story.

CORE STRATEGY 3: BE A CHAMPION FOR PUBLIC SERVICE THAT IS BASED ON RESPECT AND COLLABORATION

Purpose: Celebrate bipartisanship that is the unifying driving force behind FMC’s success. Provide opportunity for an expanded number of former Senators and Representatives to continue their service to country via FMC programs; demonstrate the power of civility.

Specific Actions:

1. Involvement. Create a call-to-action on a national and regional basis for former Members who are no longer in DC, en- gage them in FMC as an opportunity to participate in the call-to-action through FMC programming and are willing to donate their time, expertise, leadership and funding to FMC.
2. Recruitment. Expand the number of former Members of Congress, both in the Washington, DC area and in all other parts of the country, who are willing to participate in the call-to-action through FMC programming.
3. Give broader group of engaged stakeholders an opportunity to benefit the organization by expanding notion of “Congressional Family” to also include current Members, current senior staff, former senior staff, etc. via partnerships and collaborative efforts across the country.
4. Create regional hubs across the country where fully engaged FMC members can take a leadership role to recruit former colleagues in the area.

CORE STRATEGY 4: DEVELOP FMC FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT AND EFFICIENCY

Purpose: Streamline all of FMC’s resources—staff, funding, leadership—for greater impact, minimize programs and processes to capitalize on new technology, thus expanding our impact, but expending fewer of FMC’s limited resources.

Specific Actions:

1. Short-term resources. Refine our notion of where we spend our time and money in the short-term.
2. Develop a strategy specific to Congress to Campus visits that envisions an increased number of visits, a Steering Committee composed of FMC board members, and additional funding via a corporate or foundation spon- sor.
3. Decline participating in projects by out- side organizations if project does not meet the following test: Does the project further the unifying driving force behind FMC’s mission? If no, decline. If yes, will we be compensated for FMC staff time and other out- comes.
   a. If yes, proceed only if staff time is available.

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b. If no, is the project’s purpose or potential for future FMC impact worth expending our own resources? If no, decline.

3) Communicate to outside groups that there is opportunity for short notices and ad hoc programming (it will emerge clearly after a 12 to 18-month calendar of events is created which time windows lend themselves to additional programming, and which do not).

4) Streamline program implementation procedures and create templates to eliminate redundancies across the organization.

B. Long-term resources. Refine our notion of where we spend our time and money in the long-term:

1) Examine benefit of hosting charitable golf tournament.

2) Examine benefit of hosting Life After Congress Seminar.

3) Eliminate current model of Congress Bundestag Seminar.

C. Organize. Create more effective and cohesive procedures:

1) Group programming into themes.

2) Streamline staff portfolios.

3) Evaluate impact of board of directors.

4) Expand notion of “Congressional Family” and outside stakeholders.

5) Create calendar to implement cohesive message and common themes.

D. Review and Evaluate. Install an annual review process to evaluate implementation of this plan. Whether the plan’s objectives continue to be core strategies for FMC.

PLAN COMMENTARY

With current staffing and budget levels, we can:

A. Develop an across-the-organization unified visual brand to incorporate logos/look/marketing materials.

B. VICKKnickerbocker contract:

1) Develop consistent branding message.

2) Train board members and staff to communicate consistent message and deploy trained spokespersons to interact with local and national media outlets.

3) Develop social media strategy.

With additional funding, we can:

A. Redesign website.

B. Hire senior staff member as Director of Development to free other staff up for program operation and implementation instead of fundraising.

C. Develop recruitment strategy to incorporate regional outreach, DC-based former Members, strategy of tech implementation.

D. Develop new programs that are mission-specific, incorporate multiple themes we aim to advance during a given year, can serve as a recruitment tool to bring additional former Members into the fold, and take advantage of the resources like-minded organizations offer via partnerships and collaboration; new projects could include:

1) Case studies of legislation that showcase the across-the-aisle collaboration and resulted in high positive impact for the nation.

2) A national theme—civic education—that can be implemented regionally, thus creating a call-to-action and a common program for future former Members and other stakeholders across the nation.

3) Programming focused on advocating on behalf of Congress and current Members, for example highlighting the need for Congressional Reform or shining a spotlight on the tremendous fundraising demands put on current Members.

4) Social events and travel for current Members and senior Congressional staff to build bipartisan relationships.

5) Recruit previous member to assist with additional programming as well as support senior staff that service the needs of partners and collaborative projects.

F. Organize activities to recruit FMCs and to broaden the organization’s national footprint/impact.

G. Offer additional programming in DC to build across-the-aisle relationships for current Members and senior Congressional staff.

H. Purchase hardware and software to make our work more efficient, for example to offer webinars, webcasts and podcasts; this could be an option for academic institutions (colleges, community colleges) and his participation in a condensed Congress to Campus experience without the cost of travel or an administrative fee.

CROSSCUTTING THEMES FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Communicate cohesive message.

A. Develop across-the-organization look.

B. Train staff and board to communicate unified message.

Create a stronger media presence by redesigning website and social media strategy.

A. Take advantage of technology to tell more compelling and interactive story.

B. Use technology to engage membership and program participants before, during and after an FMC event.

C. Make use of the SKDKnickerbocker opportunity.

Develop cohesion across the organization.

A. Sync program themes.

B. Sync long-range calendar of events.

C. Redefine staff portfolios.

D. Redefine deliverables and expectations of board of directors.

E. Build partnerships and opportunities for collaboration.

F. Expand successful programs to new venues.

G. Expand internal definition of “Congressional Family” and FMC stakeholders.

H. Build FMC footprint that goes beyond DC.

I. Serve partners by offering FMC as a resource.

J. To utilize their projects to further FMC’s mission.

K. Elevate FMC from a DC organization to a national organization.

L. Bring broad range of FMC programming together for a regional project.

M. Empower regional stakeholders—former Members, local media, local Congressional staff, etc.—to take advantage of FMC as a resource.

Mr. STEARNS. Already, this work has had a tremendously positive impact on us. I am extremely pleased to announce that, since our last meeting, as a direct result of our strategic plan, we have secured three new grants: the Democracy Fund; the Hewlett-Packard Foundation’s Madison Initiative; and just last week, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission. These outstanding sponsors join our long-term partners to build our program, including the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

In March, a bipartisan group of 10 district directors from around the country traveled to Stuttgart, Germany, to study security issues, dual vocational education and apprenticeships, trade, and foreign investments.

In April, a bipartisan group of six district directors traveled to Houston to learn about the energy industry and workforce development.

In June, a bipartisan group of six district directors went to Boston and focused on the tech industry and education.

This October, another bipartisan group of six district directors will be going to Iceland to focus on alternative energy, the environment, and natural resources.

After all these trips, we can confirm that district directors greatly appreciated and found immense value in the opportunity to not only learn about the organized topic but to share the experience with other district directors, particularly from the other side of the aisle.

One statement heard again and again, “I have that same issue, what did you do about it?” These district directors through FMC have been able to reach out to their colleagues, to reach across what party, where in the country they are from or what the demographics of their constituency is.

For 2018, we already have confirmed another district director trip to Germany, and to Japan. We also plan for other activities to engage district directors, including possibly more domestic trips and invitations to all Former Members of Congress regional meetings.

Regional meetings are another outgrowth of our strategic plan. One clear refrain of the strategic planning sessions that we had that resonated loud
and clear was that we need to get outside of Washington more. If we are going to be supportive of Congress, we need to make sure we are not a voice just heard in D.C.

Former Members live outside of Washington, D.C., and spending much more time in their districts. It is, therefore, critical that we participate more outside of D.C. and with the congressional staff that is outside.

Since our last report to Congress, we have already hosted three regional meetings, with a fourth one planned for later this year. These meetings are a day long and not only provide an opportunity for former Members to come together, but we also provide them an opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with the younger generation by building into our program outreach to a college campus, or a high school, for example.

We were in Los Angeles late last year and included working with UCLA students. In April, we went to Chicago, where a group of former Members held a panel for Northwestern students. In July, we visited Boston, where a group of former Members and a visiting delegation from the Graduate School at Harvard met with interns in the Massachusetts State House.

We have a regional meeting in Orlando on the schedule for November 7th and have arranged for a mini Congress to Campus visit to the University of Central Florida. In addition to bringing together former Members from the region, we extend invitations to State Representatives, district directors, local academics, and others in the congressional family.

We plan to crisscross the country with regional meetings so that we can both engage our membership and meet their needs, as well as expand our mission to deepen the understanding of our democratic process and to engage the citizenry through civic education about Congress and public service.

Our last new development should be highlighted: we are issuing to our Members a call to action on the crucially important aspect of civic education. We have formed a partnership with the Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida. As you are surely aware, civic education has been one of the most important issues our dear friend Lou Frey has worked on since leaving Congress, and his institute has become a leading voice on this topic in the state and public service.

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We envision an extremely active role for former Members to play at the State level to be an advocate for civic education. Florida, of course, is a great example on how civics can be restored if there is a bipartisan consensus and commitment to make it happen.

In addition to this partnership, I am proud to share with you that we are in the process of taking our highly successful model of the international Congressional Study Groups and translating it for the first time to a domestic issue: the Congressional Study Group on Civics.

Our vision is to bring together, under our umbrella, the bipartisan congressional Republicans and Democrats; former Members and our current Members; chiefs of staff currently working on the Hill and some who left the Hill and are now in communities all over the country; and our newest constituency, district directors for current Members working together under the umbrella of the Congressional Study Group on Civics to promote civic education and make a better understanding of our representative democracy and a much greater knowledge base when it comes to Congress and the work of Members of Congress. This new undertaking is in the very beginning stages, and I look forward to reporting to you next year on our progress.

One goal of this civic outreach is to remove the stigma that now is attached to the word “politician.” John Buchanan had a quote. He was an English scholar; he wrote 42 books; he had numerous publications; he was elected to Parliament in the beginning of the 20th century; and he was appointed Governor General of the Assembly in Canada by the King.

This is what he said: “Public life is regarded as the crown of a career, and to your men and women, it is the worthiest of ambitions. Politics is still the greatest and most honorable adventure.”

If our civic education outreach can reintroduce this appreciation of public service in this next generation, then we will have succeeded.

Civic education and this commitment to reaching out to students across the country are just two of the reasons we will honor our colleague David Skaggs later today. I hope you all will join us during our luncheon in David’s honor as we recognize his exemplary service to this country with our 2017 Distinguished Service Award.

As many of you know, David was an officer in the Marine Corps in Vietnam before seeking public office. He served with Martin Frost and Vin Weber on the board of the National Endowment for Democracy. He and his lovely wife, Laura, will be with us during lunch today.

Before I yield to David to report on our Congress to Campus and Civics projects, I have to say of us all, we will join me in a round of applause for our 2017 Distinguished Service honoree, David Skaggs.

Mr. SKAGGS. Cliff, thank you very much for your very kind words. I am honored to receive this award. It is especially important because it comes from my peers, and I am humbled, given that prior recipients of this award included such giants as Amo Houghton and Lee Hamilton. My great thanks to you, the Executive Committee, and the board of directors.

I am here to talk a little bit about the Congress to Campus program that Cliff has already alluded to. It is our most impactful and important domestic program, and I am happy to report on it and also to add some thoughts about the state of civic education across America.

What a year Congress to Campus has had during 2016 and 2017. Under this program, bipartisan pairs of former Members visit college campuses for several days to speak to students from all disciplines in a variety of settings, large and small.

We have three goals: to promote public service in the next generation of Americans, to teach about Congress and the work of a Member of Congress in ways that political science doesn’t often capture, and to engage students in a discussion about the issues of the day.

The format demonstrates that a Republican and a Democrat can have different points of view and opinions but still have a respectful debate looking for common ground and a path forward. Cliff, during the election season, the Former Members of Congress sent teams to 16 campuses. We had an additional 14 visits during the spring term. It was the busiest academic year in the 35-year history of the program.

Former Members visited all over the U.S., from the University of Maine to Alcorn State in Mississippi and from the Naval Academy to Arizona State. There were also four international Congress to Campus visits.

Students come away with a better understanding of how Congress works and what the life of a Member of Congress is like. Sixty percent of the students report that their opinion of Congress improves after hearing from a bipartisan pair of former Members.

After hearing from such a visit, one student observed that Republicans and Democrats aren’t completely at odds and that they can work together. That is certainly very different than the way the media portrays things. Another student came away with a sense of how important it was to be involved in public service.

In 2016, over 50 Members gave their time to speak to almost 7,000 students, not just at colleges but to Campus to Congress program, but also students in high school and middle school. I want to thank my colleagues on behalf of the Association for their participation in these many visits.

Special thanks to the Former Members of Congress staff, particularly Sharon Witiw, who is here in the Chamber, for nurturing this important program, for getting us on to participate and expanding it in partnership with our friends at the Stennis Center. We come away with the years when a busy Congress to Campus year consisted of two or three visits per semester.
For these college audiences, we don’t talk about how a bill becomes law but, rather, examine issues deeply and look into the politics of today’s Congress. The program is civic education in practice.

I also need to report that more and more, during these visits, we encounter a lack of civic literacy, a lack of basic understanding of our Constitution and the structure and practice of American representative democracy. It seems to be getting more pronounced every year.

Our Association shares with many others across the country a growing concern about the current state of civic knowledge and skill. Just last week, the Annenberg Center at the University of Pennsylvania found in its survey that only a quarter of Americans can name all three branches of government and more than a third can’t name any of the rights protected by the First Amendment.

Lack of knowledge on the civic ed admission of our Congress to Campus program, the Association now intends to play a larger role in addressing civic illiteracy by reaching younger audiences in middle and secondary schools.

A bipartisan group of our Association came together for strategic planning around this mission. Working with the Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida, the campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, and Tufts University and facilitated by Pete Welchlin’s wife— is she here today, Pete? No. Okay— we developed a plan for how former Members could be more actively involved.

This work has generated some exciting new conversations. Cliff, as you already shared the idea of a Congressional Study Group on Civics, which we intend to have bring together current Members, district directors, and chiefs of staff, bring them into our under-taking to advance civic learning and practice.

Last week, the Association participated in a groundbreaking national symposium on civics organized by our two partners, the campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and the Lou Frey Institute, where funders and many civic organizations exchanged ideas and renewed their commitments to improving our common efforts to educate for democracy.

Pete and I were there and had the privilege on behalf of our Association, to commit us to making civic education the centerpiece of the Former Members of Congress’ domestic programs, and Pete will be on each and all of us to make good on that promise.

We have a steering committee of former Members committed to the effort. My friends and colleagues, George Nethercutt, Jim Gerlach, Bill Sarpalios, Tom Coleman, Karen Thurman, Steve Horfordsr, and Mickey Edwards join me on that committee. We will convene soon to discuss what former and current Members can do together to make a difference and to issue a call to arms to our membership.

Cliff, thank you very much for your leadership of the Association and for the opportunity to give this report.

Mr. FROST. Cliff, if we could suspend.

The Chair recognizes the distinguished Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Ryan).

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I have never spoken on this mike before, so I am going to give it a try. This is literally the first time I have spoken from this one.

Hey, Donna, how are you doing? Good to see you guys.

Greetings. Good to have you. Not much happening around here, pretty easy going, you know, slow moving, nothing controversial whatsoever. It is an interesting time, I can tell you that, one of these deals.

I came here in 1998 with many of you. I see so many familiar faces.

Good to see you, Dan.

And I would say what has changed this plan that all Members I have been here is the internet. The internet has changed society. It has also changed the way Congress works— some good, some bad, and some in between. You are basically out there seeing that.

All I would ask you to do is, in your walks of life, in your spheres of influence, just help explain to the country how this place really, actually works. Because you hear sort of the cartoon version of it when you turn on TV. It is actually a place where people care, where people work hard, where people think, where people study, where people interact, and where they get along more often than not and we actually get things done.

At a time where faith in civil society and in our government is not very high, we could use a few more ambassadors helping express to the country that the foundation here is solid, it is strong, it is enduring, and it is going to persist.

When these microphones are turned off or when the TVs are turned off, we all actually get along pretty well. About 80 percent of the things that we pass here, just like when you were here, are bipartisan. Now, clearly, we are going to have partisanship; clearly, we are going to have different viewpoints and passion. But at the end of the day, the system is strong; the system is going to work; the institutions are here; and the answers is as valid and as potent as it ever was before.

I would just say: Welcome. It is great to see all these familiar faces. You look a whole lot happier than you probably did when you were here.

If I see Members of Congress after they have left, they look like they have aged like 5 or 10 years, and I think that goes for a lot of you.

I would say this: Help us be ambassadors for this institution, for this branch of government, to revive sort of civil respect for what we do here. I think we could all use a little bit of that, and it is just really nice to see you.

God bless you.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule. I know that you do have a few things to look after these days, and thank you for being here and recognizing the significance of this organization.

Mr. Stearns.

Mr. STEARNS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and we are just delighted that you took the time to come speak with us.

David, thank you very much for that excellent report. I very much look forward to your remarks during lunch today.

My colleagues, as all of you know, our most active programming involves current Members of Congress from both parties and from both Chambers and, of course, our Congressional Study Groups. We conduct programs focusing on Europe and Asia. We bring current Members of Congress together with their peers and legislatures overseas, and we work with our Department of State to talk about representative democracy with audiences overseas, also.

Via the Former Members Association, I have met with numerous groups of legislators from other democracies who come to Washington for a better understanding of our representative government, our form of democracy, and our approach to policy and legislation both in the United States and on Capitol Hill.

These conversations and meetings are always a two-way street, and I learn as much, if not more, from our visitors as they do from me. Our Association has a longstanding partnership with a great NGO called Legacy International, bringing young professionals from the Middle East and North Africa to the United States.

Our most recent group completed their 6-week D.C. stay here, which was in the year and was composed of young professionals from Tunisia and Morocco.

Most of these visitors worked in the NGO sector in their countries, and they
came to the United States to learn about the interaction between government and the nongovernmental sector. It is truly a very enriching cross-cultural dialogue, and I am very cross that FMC offers this opportunity to our Members and to their visitors.

As I stated earlier, the main international activity of our Association is housed with the Congressional Study Groups on Japan, Germany, and Europe. These are our programs that involve current Members of Congress as well as current senior congressional staff. I now invite my good friend and predecessor, Connie Morella of Maryland, to report on this aspect of our international work.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Cliff, for the introduction and all of your comments, and particularly for your leadership of Former Members of Congress during this year. You have done a superlative job.

Well, as you know, Former Members of Congress works with all Members of the congressional family. Our network also includes Members of Congress and their senior staff to promote a collaborative, bipartisan, and effective approach to policymaking both at home and abroad.

Our programs for our colleagues who are still in office are the Congressional Study Groups on Germany, Japan, and Europe. The Congressional Study Groups are independent, bipartisan legislative exchanges that strive to create better understanding and cooperation between the United States and our most important strategic and economic partners abroad.

Each study group has a membership roster of between 75 and 125 Members of Congress, and it is led by a bipartisan, bicameral pair of co-chairs who are currently in Congress. Our model celebrates active discussions among all participants, avoiding lengthy speeches or formalities, in order to create an atmosphere that promotes personal connections. We believe that the network of peers created via our personal connections. We believe that participants, avoiding lengthy speeches that strive to create better understanding and cooperation between the United States and our most important strategic and economic partners abroad.

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you also for the continued leadership that you have provided for the former Members of Congress. Your counsel is always appreciated and is invaluable.

I now will lead to another former president of our Association, Dennis Hertel of Michigan. Dennis, along with former Member Ken Kramer, has been the driving force behind a program that is incredibly near and dear to our hearts: our efforts to help severely wounded veterans returning from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan.

We have sponsored an annual charity golf tournament called The Members—to avoid any confusion with The Masters—and we really have had a tremendous impact.

Dennis.

Mr. HERTEL. Thank you, Cliff.

Let me associate myself with Connie Morella’s remarks. Your leadership of FMC has been exemplary, and your report today is a tribute to our great energy and commitment. On behalf of our Association, thank you very much, Connie.

I want to thank Speaker Ryan for what he said today about coming to visit us, but also talking about our being ambassadors to the Nation, I think we are, not only the Nation, but worldwide, about the Congress and how proud we are of the Congress and the democracy that we have here, and even with our great differences in today’s world, how we carry on and represent the people and commend the Congress for doing so.

I am tremendously pleased to share with our colleagues an update on our charitable golf tournament. As Cliff mentioned, I, along with Ken Kramer, co-chair the event, which is now in its 11th year.

Back in 2006, we had low attendance. It was just a competitive match that we had between Republicans and Democrats out at Andrews Air Force Base and very private. We were dwindling in our attendance, and we thought maybe we could change this and make it into something effective for the community.

We were able to transform it into something that was fun but also, more importantly, inspirational, where the focus was not just on your golfing ability. I am the example. I am not a golfer. I have co-chaired this for 10 years with Ken now, but I am the worst duffer you ever went out there, and yet the Democrats still won even with me on their team this year.

It has become successful. As of today, the tournament has raised almost $1.3 million to help veterans and their families deal with injuries sustained during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

The two beneficiaries of the money raised, Warfighters Sports, a division of Disabled Sports USA who helps with 120 different sports for their members across this Nation, and we have been injured in defending our country, and Tee It Up for the Troops, are two outstanding organizations that use adaptive sports as a way for severely wounded veterans to reengage with their families and communities and get a bit of their prewar activity back into their lives. These guys go skiing, they go mountain climbing, horseback riding. You name it, they do it. We are so proud of the men and women and what they have accomplished.

We are proud that for the last 3 years, we have shared this honor of co-chairing the tournament with Congressman Jimmy Duncan of Tennessee, who I am sorry to see is retiring now, and he has just been our chairman and a great friend to all of us all these years—and Congressman Gene Green of Texas, who has just been an outstanding leader and is going to continue with us, I hope. He is just so enthusiastic in getting Members out there.

They are the ones who recruit the current Members of Congress, and they bug them and hassle them every week to get them out to our tournament. We have had more people, more Members at our tournament than other golf tournaments. There are so many different tournaments here in Washington that have Members play, but we have had the greatest turnout over the years.

It is unlike any other golf tournament. There is still a little friendly competition. As I said, the Democrats won this year. I can’t say that enough, because we lost for the past 7 years. And you know, Republicans belong to more country clubs than Democrats, anyway. I think they have more experience.

More importantly, we have had over 30 wounded veterans play this last year, and every year in our tournament, so many wounded veterans, and it is just inspirational.

I played with a veteran from Michigan, a young man who had been in Afghanistan 2 weeks on the Army police force there and lost his leg in a bomb explosion. And he was out there playing golf. Just an outstanding golfer, outstanding American, and to share that day with him has just been an honor for all of us.

So we are already working now on the tournament for next year. It will be April of next year. We hope we will once again get the Members out. As I have said, we have done really well with current Members of Congress, but what we really need is all the Members out. It doesn’t matter our age or our ability. Even if you can just come out for the day and spend it with the veterans, you know, watching the match and having lunch and dinner and breakfast with the Members and, more importantly, the veterans, that is really worthwhile. If you bring your family out there too for a while, that is fine too. It is always at the Army and Navy Club, so it is convenient.

We finish early. We start early. We start at 8 and we finish about 4 in the afternoon, so we leave before the rush hour traffic so the Members can get back here for a vote. So we would love to have you come out even for a few hours if you have the time.

Ken Kramer, Pete Weichlein and I back in 2006 wondered whether we could change our existing tournament to something more meaningful, and decided to transform the golf event from a friendly competitive tour- nament to a fun and inspirational fundraiser, where the focus was not on your golfing ability, but rather on coming together, on a bipartisan basis, former and current Members alike, for a great cause. I think I can speak for Ken and Pete when I say that we have succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. As of today the tournament has raised almost $1.3 million to help veterans and their families deal with injuries sustained during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. The two beneficiaries of the money raised, Warfighters Sports, a division of Disabled Sports USA, and Tee It Up for the Troops are two outstanding organizations that use adaptive sports as a way for severely wounded warriors to re-engage with their families and communities and get a bit of their prewar activity back into their lives.

Both Ken Kramer and I have had the honor to be cochair of this tournament for the past 10 years, and we are proud that the last three years we have shared this honor with Congressman Jimmy Duncan of Tennessee and Congressman Gene Green of Texas. Jimmy and Gene are still co-chairing the tournament for the Members to the tournament. This tournament is unlike any other golf tournament. Although there still is a little friendly competition with the Speakers Cup, which the Democrats won this year after several years of losing to the Republicans. Over 30 wounded veterans played in the tournament. It is quite amazing to see a wounded warrior, for example, someone who has lost a leg, drive the ball like a pro, out-shooting everyone in the foursome, or be inspired with stories of the courage you hear while playing a round of golf with a warrior suffering from traumatic brain injury. The tournament we hosted earlier this year was our most successful yet, with the greatest number of players and the largest dollar amount raised, and we are already working on the next tournament in April 2018.

Before I yield the floor back to Cliff, let me thank him and Martin Frost for their incredible leadership on our annual gala event, the Statesmanship Awards Dinner. Cliff is FMC’s president and Martin is the event’s chairman. They work tirelessly on making the dinner a signature event here in D.C., and, more importantly, a huge successful evening for all of us. And they do not receive any funding from Congress, as Cliff pointed out again this morning. Not a single taxpayer dollar is earmarked for any of our programs, which, in my opinion, is exactly the way it should be. We are independent, we raise our own money, and our former Members donate their time pro bono for all the different programs that we have. As Cliff went over, we had former Members donate to us an astounding 6,500 hours of pro bono public service, even without the dedicated staff of the Stuar- tarium. Running all of our outstanding programs does cost a lot of money and staff time. Therefore, in addition to
foundation grants, the Statesmanship Awards Dinner is an incredibly important piece of FMC’s budgetary puzzle.

Over the years, I have heard so many of our former Members talk about how much they appreciate our staff and how much they accomplish. They are doing for us and what they are doing for our country is this dinner. That is the one thing that we can all demonstrate our support at, because it pays their salaries. So if you appreciate what they do and you think they deserve a bonus, the best way to help them and to improve our Association is to help us sell tickets for this dinner.

Unfortunately, last month, as I’m sure you’ve heard, we sold out, a week before the dinner on September 27. But we are proud of the efforts of the executive director who spearheaded this effort to change it up, let’s move it to the Mellon Auditorium, which has been a tremendous, majestic setting, and let’s have some outside awardees that we honor too. Let’s not just have a boring program where we have people get up and receive an award and then take pictures. Let’s have a panel discussion instead so we can involve the audience and take some questions and we all stay awake and people don’t sneak out early, because it is interesting to hear that panel discussion.

That is what Pete Weichlein has created now, and I think it is those two decisions that we now have the signature event here in Washington. We have changed it up, let’s go out there and see. Where do we see more and more people come, more and more active Members come, people from the administration, past Members come. The Speaker has been supportive, the majority leader, minority leaders have been supportive in so many ways. I just think it is a way that we get to talk about what we do to a broader audience, and for them actually to say thank you to us by coming to that dinner.

We are recognizing via this dinner the tremendous power of bipartisanship, something that Speaker Ryan talked about that is so important to all of us, and it really is exemplified in that dinner every year by the awards that we give to the staff program, we have, and the people that attend.

So this year we are going to be honoring as honorees Senators Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray, along with House Members Diana DeGette and, my good friend, Fred Upton from Michigan. The presentation of the award of our honorees on stage again so that those in attendance can hear about their success reaching across the political aisle and working together for the good of the country. They are able to tell stories about exactly how they accomplish things and what they did and the kind of personal relationships that they have and why that makes a difference, the kind of thing that we know about, that we want to reach the larger world and understand that things are done by individuals working together, and not by speeches and by fundraising alone, but by Members of Congress being effective and caring about moving the ball forward.

The biennial Annual Statesmanship Awards Dinner is one of the most impressive in town. You will not regret becoming involved. You will see more of your former colleagues from both the House and the Senate, as well as ambassadors. Connie Maylin has brought momentous changes to that dinner and more administrative officials and former officials than ever before.

I am thinking of Speaker Ryan. A lot of us served with his former boss, Jack Kemp. Jack Kemp was in the Reagan administration and was such a leader. It just flows down from people who have served before carrying that torch forward, and I think Speaker Ryan is an excellent example of that. So the dinner exemplifies that, and it has become an increasingly lively event, showcasing our Association.

I hope all of you will join Martin and all the hard work he is doing. He will push us. He is really good at pushing us. He did that when he did it for the Democrats. He is a fundraiser. Now he does it, very importantly, for our Association. We would like that muscle to be used in a bipartisan way now.

Cliff’s leadership is outstanding across the board and tireless. So thank you very much. We are looking forward to a great dinner in 2018.

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Dennis. We are now going to recognize Cliff again. As part of this meeting, we have to conduct some formal business, which is to reconstitute our board, to continue our officers. Cliff has some remarks about staff also, but this is the actual business part of the meeting that we are required to conduct.

Mr. STEARNS. Martin, thank you for that overview.

And, Dennis, thank you very much for that very impressive report. We appreciate your leadership. You and Ken have given so much over the years for this golf tournament. I can only echo your remarks about the Statesmanship Awards Dinner, which will be held next year on March 21.

As I mentioned earlier, we have added four new staff members, and I hope that throughout the day you will have an opportunity to meet them. They are: Alia Diamond, who is working on our communications; Kathy Hans, helping us with our grants and membership; Patrick Egenhofer, focused on the Congressional Study Group on Germany and some of our domestic programs; and Paul Kincaid, who is our brand-new director of Congressional Outreach, and his first day is today. We welcome all of you.

The rest of our team that you have had a chance to work with over the years are, and let me simply mention their names.

Alexis Terai, who is part of our international team and runs our Congressional Study Group on Japan. She is fluent in Japanese, was educated in the United States and abroad, and has been
the key component to making our Study Group on Japan the largest and most active international exchange we offer to current Members of Congress.

Lorraine Harbison is our International Programs Manager with main focus on Japan Program. Additionally, she makes the Diplomatic Advisory Council such a great success and has grown it from just a handful of embassies to now over four dozen actively participating Ambassadors.

She is our director of community outreach and oversees the smooth separation of projects such as the Congress to Campus program. She is also in charge of creating the vision we have for our Congressional Study Group on Civics, and you will be hearing from her as programming for their projects commences next year.

Sabine Schleidt is our managing director who spends most of her time on the current Member international programs, but also a lot of hours on implementing the civic vision and fundraising goals of our Association. With our new hire of Paul Kincaid as director of congressional outreach, Sabine’s role will be much more focused on development, strategy, and engaging our members. Sabine led our organization over 6 years ago, and, thanks to her creativity and her simply can-do attitude, we have grown tremendously under her leadership.

And lastly, Pete Welchlin is our chief executive officer, who has been with the Association for over 18 years, first as a program director, then as international program director, and, since 2003, as our CEO. When you think about that, when he became the CEO, the former Members of Congress was in a dire financial situation, and, over the years, he has taken this organization with his leadership to new heights, and I think all of us really appreciate his efforts.

So all of you, if you would, please give an outstanding group of professionals a big round of applause.

Hoorah, hoorah, hoorah.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome to Washington a large delegation of former members of the European Parliament. As you know, we have two incredibly meaningful and active global partnerships, with our colleagues in Ottawa and our colleagues in Brussels. We often coordinate particularly our democracy-strengthening projects, and we exchange best practices. We are so thrilled to have them with us today on the House floor. They are led by their president of the Association of Former Members of the European Parliament, the Honorable Enrique Baron Crespo. Thank you so much for coming, and we appreciate your attendance.

Every year at our annual meeting, we ask the membership to elect new officers and board members. I, therefore, now will read to you the names of our candidates for board members and officers. They are running unopposed; and I, therefore, will ask for a simple “yea” or “nay” as I present to you the list of candidates as our slate.

For the Association’s board of directors, the candidates are: Jim Coyne of Pennsylvania, Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, Steve Horsford of Nevada, Ken Kramer of Colorado, Jim Matheson of Utah, Jim Moran of Virginia, Karen Thurman of Florida, Ed Whitfield of Kentucky.

All in favor of electing these eight former Members to our board of directors, please say “yea.” Any opposed? Hearing no opposition, the slate has been elected.

Next, we will elect our executive committee. As president, I serve a 2-year term, which will end in 2018. However, the other three elected members of the executive committee are up for re-election to a 1-year term.

The candidates for our executive committee are:

Martin Frost of Texas for vice president.

Tom Petri of Wisconsin for secretary.

Karen Thurman of Florida for treasurer.

All in favor of electing these three former Members to our executive committee say “yea.” Any opposed? Hearing no opposition, the slate has been elected by the membership.

The executive committee is completed by Barbara Kennelly, who is an unelected officer in her capacity as immediate past president. Thank you.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Stearns, if you would suspend for just a moment, we are honored to have with us the distinguished Democratic whip, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. President Stearns and Vice President Frost, and Tom, who is going to tell you what to do, welcome back; although, I see a lot of you, from time to time, as you walk the halls and remind us of the good old days.

We have been quite North for so far, as I think you have noticed. You heard me talk before, and I am sure you have made this recognition already, we lost one of the great Americans with whom many of us have served, Bob Michel. Bob Michel passed away. Bob Dole is still with us, still with a great sense of humor, and, frankly, I miss those two Republicans dearly, and I miss a lot of you as well.

We can remember when we were much more collegial than we now find ourselves. We can remember when an election in Alabama which does not bode well for future collegiality in the United States Senate, I think. We will see what happens in that election. Obviously, that was the primary. We will see what happens in the general.

I think all of us have a responsibility to talk about the Congress that we have served in over the years. This is my 36th year in the Congress. I don’t know that any of you served that long, and some are asking why I am serving that long.

Nick Rahall, how many years did you serve?

Mr. RAHALL. Thirty-eight.

Mr. HOYER. Thirty-eight. So I have to run one more time at least. Right, Nick?

But in any event, I like to be with each of you every year that you come back here. As I say, I see some of you. And the Historical Society obviously does a wonderful job. I think that when I see you and we say, “Hello, to one another,” it is in a different context in which we meet as people who have participated in a very important and historic way, have worked together, have respected the process of the institution, and have differed, obviously, but, nevertheless, were able to come to a place where we agreed to disagree and to at least act on that on which we could agree.

I think that was very important for our country. As I have said before, and I continue to be concerned about what we project to the country. The Congress now has single-digit approval. They don’t believe the board of directors of the United States of America is working, and I think that is of great concern to all of us as citizens, as Americans that we can’t be successful as a nation if we have so little respect from the people who we represent, or confidence that we are doing the work that they want done.

I try to convey to them, and I want to tell you, as you know, the majority leader, Kevin McCarthy of California, and I get along well. We don’t always agree, obviously. ROY BLUNT, who is one of my best friends, as I think some of you know, is now a Senator from Missouri but was the minority whip, and was the acting minority leader, and not a minority whip for a period of time. He likes to say, “Connie, Steny and I always agree when there are at least 420 other people voting the same way,” which is to say unanimous consent essentially we agree.

ROY and I didn’t agree, but when we agreed, we made the right decision in a bipartisan way. KEVIN McCarthy and I do the same—not as often because we are more polarized than when most of you served in this Congress. When you served in this Congress, you remember, there were real confrontations. Some of us served in the 1950s and 60s, and they were pretty tough years, but even in those times when you served, there was an ability, I think, to work more closely together than now exists.

John Boehner is not in the Congress because he wanted to work together, and we did on some very significant things. And John finally said: Look, if I can’t get 218 on my side, I am not sure I want to be Speaker. He wasn’t pushed out. People who say John Boehner was pushed out are wrong. John Boehner decided to leave. He wasn’t pushed out. He would have had the majority of support on his side of the aisle all the time. There was no doubt about that.
But I think John just got frustrated about his inability to galvanize a majority. I think Mitch McConnell, probably empathizes a lot with John Boehner right now. Probably all of you think so as well.

But if you come here, and I thank you for staying engaged, staying involved—raising the institution, as opposed to the partisanship, but the institution and what its role is in our democracy.

People talk about: Every 2 years, you really ought to change that. I am not sure that we ought to change it. The Founding Fathers were undoubtedly right, in my opinion. Does it cause us problems? Yes. Well, I tell my colleagues on my side: You cannot solve America’s problems in 24-month cycles. What I mean by that, of course, is if all we have is thinking that goes from election to election, we won’t be able to solve America’s problems because they are not just subject to a 24-month solution. We have got to think longer term.

I am very worried about the debt, as I am sure some of you are, but we continue to depend on cutting taxes, and both sides do that talk about how we need to balance the budget. We are not there.

I thank you for staying engaged. I thank you for continuing to communicate with the public, with my constituents and your constituents, your former constituents as your fellow American citizens, to try to encourage them. Where people say: When are you guys going to get together? My response to them is: As soon as you do. And they look at me quizzically. I say: As soon as you elect, on both sides of the aisle—Nick, have I talked too long? Is that my signal? What Nick is saying is: You junior Members need to get off the floor.

Mr. FROST. I would advise Mr. HOYER that there is no 5-minute rule here; however, we do have to vacate the floor in 15 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. I am about to end.

My point to you is we need to work together to make sure that our citizens do not believe that if you make an agreement with the other side you have sold out. I don’t care which side you are on. Democracy is about compromise. Democracy is about working together. Democracy is about the creation of consensus. If we can’t do that, we will not succeed as a country. Forget about Republicans and Democrats, we won’t succeed as a country. I know you continue to do that, and, very frankly, looking at so many of you with whom I have had the honor and pleasure of serving, I know that when you were here, you worked at doing that. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Frost.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Stearns.

Mr. STEARNS. I just want to thank Mr. Frost, the Democratic whip, for his kindness in coming by to give his remarks, and we appreciate his leadership and serving.

My colleagues, it is now my sad duty to inform the Congress of those former Members and current Members who have passed away since our last report. As all of you know, at the conclusion of our annual meeting later today, we will hold a memorial service in Statutory Hall here in Washington D.C., where we will be joined by many of the families, as well as current Members of Congress, to pay tribute to the public servants we have lost.

In addition, it is altogether proper to recognize our Representatives and Senators this morning here in the Chamber of the House of Representatives.

I ask all of you, including the visitors in the gallery, to now rise as I read the names. At the end of the list, we will pay our respects to their memory with a moment of silence. We honor these men and women for their service to our country. There are 32 names. They are:

William Ainsworth of Colorado
Bill Barrett of Nebraska
Anthony Beilenson of California
Helen Bentley of Maryland
John Brademas of Indiana
William Carney of New York
Eligio "Kika" de la Garza of Texas
Pete Domenici of New Mexico
Jay Dickey of Arkansas
Vernon J. Ehlers of Michigan
Emi F.H. Faleomavaega of American Samoa
Robert Garcia of New York
Benjamin A. Gilman of New York
John Glenn of Ohio
Ken Hechler of West Virginia
Lawrence J. Hogan, Sr., of Maryland
Clyde Holloway of Louisiana
Bill Hudnut of Indiana
Raymond P. Kogovsek of Colorado
Melvin Laird of Wisconsin
Steven LaTourrette of Ohio
Mike Lowry of Washington
Dawson Mathis of Georgia
Robert Michel of Illinois
Abner Mikva of Illinois
Robert Morgan of North Carolina
Ralph Regula of Ohio
Clint Roberts of South Dakota
Mark Takai of Hawaii
Burt Talcott of California
Ray Thornton of Arkansas
George Voinovich of Ohio

We will now have a moment of silence.

Thank you.

My colleagues, this concludes the 47th Report to Congress by the Association of Former Members of Congress.

Let me leave you with one final thought as we exit this historic Chamber. David Hume, as you know, was a great political philosopher, and this is what he said: “Of all men that distinguish themselves by memorable achievements, the first place of honor seems due to legislators and founders of states who transmit a system of laws and institutions to secure the peace, happiness, and liberty of future generations.”

We thank the Congress, the Speaker, and the minority leader for giving us the opportunity to return to this revered and beloved Chamber and to report on our Association’s activities. We look forward to another active and productive year, and I want to thank all of you for your attendance. Please join us for coffee and danishes in Room H-122 as we leave the Chamber.

God bless America.

Mr. FROST. The Chair again wishes to thank the former Members of the House and Senate for their presence here today.

Before terminating these proceedings, the Chair would like to invite those former Members who did not respond to the roll when it was called to give their names to the Reading Clerk for inclusion in the roll.

I have noticed some of your presence and have handed a revised list to the Reading Clerk, but I may have missed a few of you. So, if you did not answer the roll, please stop by before you leave.

Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; according to the previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, September 28, 2017, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table and referred as follows:

2666. 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-2017-0503; Product Identifier 2017-NM-002-A2; Amendment 2120-AD; AD 2017-17-19] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2667. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Adding the Polar Ship Certificate to the List of SOLAS Certificates and Certificates Issued by Recognized Classification Societies [Docket No.: USCG-2016-0880] (RIN: 1625-AC35) received September 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2668. 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-2017-0672; Product Identifier 2016-NM-148-AD; Amendment 39-19002; AD 2017-17-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2669. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of
Transportation, transmitting the
Department’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes (Dock-
et No.: FAA-2017-0377; Product Identifier 2017-NM-120-AD; Amendment 39-19005; AD 2017-17-16) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2676. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes (Dock-
et No.: FAA-2017-0247; Product Identifier 2016-NM-180-AD; Amendment 39-19015; AD 2017-17-19) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2677. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company Turbofan Engines (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0164; Product Identifier 2017-NE-06-AD; Amendment 39-19008; AD 2017-17-18) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2678. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes (Dock-
et No.: FAA-2017-07270; Product Identifier 2015-NM-116-AD; Amendment 39-19025; AD 2017-18-16) (RIN: 2120-AA66) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2679. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes (Dock-
et NO.: FAA-2017-0471; Product Identifier 2017-NM-196-AD; Amendment 39-19005; AD 2017-17-15) (RIN: 2120-AA66) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2680. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airlines (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0243; Product Identifier 2016-NM-100-AD; Amendment 39-18964; AD 2017-16-07) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2681. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes (Dock-
et No.: FAA-2017-0128; Product Identifier 2016-NM-194-AD; Amendment 39-18999; AD 2017-17-09) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2682. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Viking Air Limited (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bombardier, Inc; Canadair Limited) Airplanes (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0474; Product Identifier 2016-NM-096-AD; Amendment 39-19007; AD 2017-17-17) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2683. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; ATR — GIE Avions de Transport Re-
jionales (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0616; Product Identifier 2016-NM-125-AD; Amendment 39-19000; AD 2017-17-10) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2684. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Aviation Airplanes (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0496; Product Identifier 2016-

4518; Product Identifier 2016-NM-175-AD; Amendment 39-18998; AD 2017-17-08) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2685. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0518; Product Identifier 2015-NM-091-AD; Amendment 39-18989; AD 2017-16-12) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2686. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc Turbofan Engines (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0652; Product Identifier 2017-NM-197-AD; Amendment 39-18973; AD 2017-17-07) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2687. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Diamond Aircraft Industries GmbH Airplanes (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0638; Prod-

uct Identifier 2017-CE-018-AD; AD 2017-19-09) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2688. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0474; Product Identifier 2017-NM-196-AD; Amendment 39-19005; AD 2017-17-15) (RIN: 2120-AA66) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2689. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes (Docknet No.: FAA-2017-0474; Product Identifier 2017-NM-196-AD; Amendment 39-19005; AD 2017-17-15) (RIN: 2120-AA66) received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2690. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Depart-
ment’s temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Atlantic Ocean, Ocean City, NJ (Docknet No.: Docket No. USCG-2017-1166) received September 21, 2017, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 410 note; Public Law 105-285, Sec. 141(d); (112 Stat. 2771); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

2691. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service’s IRB only rule — Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma
H.R. 3489. A bill to extend certain provisions of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act until September 30, 2030, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 3560. A bill to direct the Federal Trade Commission to establish labels that may be used as a voluntary means of indicating to consumers the extent to which products are of United States origin, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. FOXX (for herself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. HULTORST, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 3581. A bill the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to provide for rewards for the arrest or conviction of persons who are significant security risks of the national security.

By Ms. MENÉNDEZ (for herself, Mr. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SOTO, and Mr. GUTIÉRREZ):

H.R. 3582. A bill to permit the waiver of Jones Act requirements for military relief efforts; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, 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. PANETTA (for himself, Mr. CUSHING of Florida, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Mr. RASKIN):

H.R. 3584. A bill to provide for nuclear weapons abolition and economic conversion in accordance with District of Columbia Initiative Measure Number 37 of 1992, while ensuring environmental restoration and clean energy conversion; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, 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 Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Mr. STEFANIK, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H.R. 3585. A bill to require a report on significant security risks of the national electric grid and the potential effect of such security risks on the readiness of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. HURLEY, Mr. PERSENTA, Mr. WILK, Mr. CUMMINS, and Mr. GROARK):

H.R. 3586. A bill to restate reporting requirements related to United States-Hong Kong relations; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Financial Services, 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 Mrs. WAGNER (for herself, Mr. BAHR, Mr. MESSER, Mr. TROTTS, Mr. POSEY, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. BODD, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, and Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee):

H.R. 3587. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to establish standards of conduct for brokers and dealers that are in the best interest of their retail customers; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Education and the Workforce, 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 Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California (for herself, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Ms. HANABURA, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. MOORE, Mr. EVANS, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. NORTON, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. BLUMENTAER, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. LEE, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. BLUNT ROCHSTER, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. MECKS, Mr. NADLER, Mr. SHERR, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. LAWSON, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. SUGGIZI, Mr. CORREA of California, Mr. JACKSON of New York, Ms. JACKSON Lee, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LOESACK, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. WALZ, Mr. HERR, Mr. WELSH, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. BROWN of California, Ms. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. BASS, and Mr. CÁRDENAS):

H.R. 3588. A bill making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for the TIGER Discretionary Grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations, and in addition to the Committee on 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 Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California (for herself, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Ms. HANABURA, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. MOORE, Mr. EVANS, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. NORTON, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. BLUMENTAER, Mr. KATRINA, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. LEE, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. BLUNT ROCHSTER, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. MECKS, Mr. NADLER, Mr. SHERR, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. LAWSON, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. SUGGIZI, Mr. CORREA of California, Mr. JACKSON of New York, Ms. JACKSON Lee, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LOESACK, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. WALZ, Mr. HERR, Mr. WELSH, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. BROWN of California, Ms. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. BASS, and Mr. CÁRDENAS):
H.R. 3859. A bill making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for the Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as may be in order, for consideration of which the Speaker may reserve the Yeas and Nays.

By Mr. KHANNA (for himself, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. POE, and Mr. JONES):

H. Res. 81. Concurrent resolution directing the President pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution to remove United States Armed Forces from unauthorized hostilities in the Republic of Yemen; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California (for herself, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. VELAZQUEZ, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. McCOLLUM, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. SARLAN, Ms. LEE, and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD):

H. Res. 541. A resolution recognizing the achievements of Asian American and Native Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions on the 10th anniversary of their establishment; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself and Ms. SHEA-PORTEER):

H. Res. 542. A resolution expressing support for designation of the week of October 1 through 7, 2017, as “Latex Allergy Awareness Week”; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. QUIGLEY:

H. Res. 543. A resolution congratulating Northeastern Illinois University on the sesquicentennial of the University; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

126. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey, relative to Assembly Resolution No. 254, urging the President and Congress to expand access to afterschool summer meal programs and streamline the application process for summer meals; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

127. A memorial of the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey, relative to Assembly Resolution No. 234, urging Congress not eliminate the property tax deduction available under United States federal tax law; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted with respect to the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. CÁRDENAS:

H.R. 3856. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 3847. 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. 3848. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution and Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution, which give Congress power to make laws governing the time, place, and manner of Federal elections.

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama:

H.R. 3849. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 3850. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Ms. FOXX:

H.R. 3851. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 grants Congress the power “To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;”

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 3852. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 3853. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution.

By Mr. PANETTA:

H.R. 3854. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 provides Congress with the power to “regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.”

By Mr. ROSEN:

H.R. 3855. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14 and 16 of the U.S. Constitution (“To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces, and ‘To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress”).

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 3856. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14 of the Constitution.

By Mrs. WAGNER:

H.R. 3857. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 3858. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution and Article I, Section 9, clause 7 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 3859. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution and Article I, Section 9, clause 7 of the U.S. Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 1409: Mr. P. J. RODNEY.
H.R. 36: Mr. BURKERS and Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida.
H.R. 66: Mr. THORNBERRY.
H.R. 299: Mr. DIXNAM.
H.R. 377: Mr. NOMAN and Mrs. HARTZEK.
H.R. 392: Mr. DOOGIEIT and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.
H.R. 502: Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. BENGAY.
L. JUAN of New Mexico, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, and Mr. ESPAILLAT.
H.R. 335: Mr. FRANK of Arizona and Mr. GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 644: Mr. AUSTON SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 664: Mr. GOTTHEIMER and Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 721: Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 747: Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. GOWDY, and Mr. SCHINDLER.
H.R. 785: Mrs. BLACK, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. ROKITTA, and Mr. OLSO.
H.R. 790: Mr. SOTO.
H.R. 795: Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, and Mr. McGOVERN.
H.R. 907: Mrs. NOEM and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 966: Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 972: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 959: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 967: Mr. BARN.
H.R. 1017: Mr. BEE, Mr. TIPTON, and Mr. FASO.
H.R. 1035: Mr. SINEMA.
H.R. 1057: Mr. NOM and Mr. NUNKES.
H.R. 1098: Mr. ROKITTA.
H.R. 1148: Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 1156: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. HUNTER.
H.R. 1164: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. COMER, and Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 1200: Mrs. BLACKER.
H.R. 1225: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. LANGSTON, Mr. DEMERSAL, and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1235: Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 1270: Mr. LOBRSACK.
H.R. 1276: Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. MENG, and Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 1279: Mr. HASTINGS.
H.R. 1257: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 1380: Mr. NOLAN and Mr. DUFFY.
H.R. 1384: Mr. PASTO.
H.R. 1419: Mr. CROFT.
H.R. 1459: Mr. MACARTHUR.
H.R. 1484: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 1494: Mr. HUDSON, Ms. BLUNT ROCHETTE, and Mr. HEYER.
H.R. 1602: Ms. SHEA-PORTEER.
H.R. 1606: Mr. PALAZZO.
H.R. 1674: Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 1699: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 1225: Mr. ROBERTS.
H.R. 1323: Mr. PETERS and Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 1825: Mr. PETERS and Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 1865: Mr. REICHERT, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. FLORES, and Mr. SHUSTER.
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The Senate met at 10:01 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable Tom Cotton, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

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

Let us pray.

Immortal and Invisible God, You continue to be our shelter in the time of storms. Thank You for being our Nation’s protection.

Give our Senators the wisdom to place their confidence in You, instead of in national power and prestige. Lord, inspire our lawmakers with Your presence. Dispel all fear. May they remember that in the most turbulent and unpredictable of times, You are still in charge of our Nation and world.

Give each of our citizens the ability to know and do Your will. Lord, be in our midst so that we will experience peace even in the midst of a storm.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 27, 2017.

To the Senate:

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

Orrin G. Hatch,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME
The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS
The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED
The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1519, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 165, S. 1519, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1519, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3354) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes.

Mr. McConnell. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

TAX REFORM
Mr. McConnell. Mr. President, later today, I look forward to joining members of the Senate Finance Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, and other congressional leaders in unveiling a unified framework for fixing our Nation’s broken Tax Code. It is an idea that can bring much needed relief to middle-class families and small businesses and help keep more jobs right here in America. It is the result of a lot of hard work and input from Members, committees, staffs, and the administration, to name a few, and I want to thank them again for their continued diligence on behalf of our country.

This framework is focused on supporting American jobs, while making taxes fairer, and on growing families’ paychecks. It is a refreshing change from our current outdated Tax Code, which for too long hasn’t worked for many Americans.

The current code forces individuals, families, and small businesses to navigate a web of schedules, deductions, and penalties. Rates are too high. Incentives often make little to no sense. Some actually encourage companies to ship American jobs overseas. Moreover, for 8 years under the Obama administration, our economy grew at a sluggish rate—never living up to its real potential. Too many Americans struggled to get ahead, many living paycheck to paycheck. It is time for a significant change in favor of families and jobs.

***This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.***
RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. SCHUMER. Good morning, Mr. President. First, I would like to talk about tax reform.

Today, President Trump and Republican leaders will announce several proposals as part of their tax plan. According to recent reports, that plan will include proposals to repeal the estate tax, raise the top rate on passthrough entities, lower the top rate, and actually raise the bottom tax rate. Each of these proposals would result in a massive windfall for the wealthiest Americans and provide almost no relief to middle-class taxpayers who need it most.

It seems that President Trump and Republicans have designed their plan to be cheered in the country clubs and the corporate boardrooms. How does repealing the estate tax help middle-class people?

Only 5,200 of the wealthiest families in America, couples whose estates are worth $11 million, pay the estate tax. Are there any middle-class families whose rates would be raised? Is that the President’s definition of the middle class?

The estate tax is skewed to the very wealthiest among us, and they are going to repeal it. This is not going to fly with the American people, let me tell you.

Our Republican colleagues tried to do something the public disliked on healthcare—taking away benefits, reducing healthcare. Now they are trying to do the same thing on taxes, helping the very wealthiest. They are going to be in for a rude awakening because the American people are going to rise up against this. Over 70 percent of Americans are against tax breaks for wealthy Americans and wealthy corporations.

Lowering the rate on passthrough entities would create a huge loophole, allowing very wealthy Americans, such as hedge fund managers, to funnel their income through a business entity in order to avoid the top bracket and pay a much lower rate. So the upper middle-class family making $100,000 or $200,000 or $300,000 can pay 39 percent, but these wealthy hedge fund managers, lawyers, and whoever, through a passthrough, can pay no corporate tax and then a 25-percent rate on the rest of their taxes. Does that help middle-class Americans? Absolutely not. Does it help the wealthiest who have the grudge them. Many of them have worked very hard to get their money. Some of them get it through an estate; so be it. But the wealthiest among us need a tax break. They are doing great.

All of the statistics show that those at the highest end are making more money than ever before and the middle class is flat or sinking. Who needs the Baker rule? The Washington Post-ABC poll showed yesterday that more than 70 percent of Americans say our tax system already tends to favor wealth more than the middle class. This bill makes it much worse.

One more thing to watch today is whether the President and his Republicans provide any details about how they intend to pay for these massive cuts. Without these details, I suspect Republicans will turn the age-old trick of promising that economic growth will make up for the entire difference. Some of them call it dynamic scoring, but that name obscures what dynamic scoring really is.

President Trump calls the media outlet fake news. Dynamic scoring is fake math. It is just made-up, fake math to hide another deficit-busting tax cut to benefit the wealthiest Americans.

No less of an authority than James Baker, a conservative Republican and former Republican Treasury Secretary who led the last successful tax reform effort under President Reagan, said:

We must not let tax revenues decline and worsen the deficit. In other words, tax reform must be revenue neutral and should be judged on its own merits.

Let’s call it the Baker rule—the Jim Baker rule: Tax reform must be revenue neutral, judged on its own merits, with no dynamic scoring and no fake math.

I am amazed that President Trump, whenever he talks, says he wants to help the middle class, and his plan at best throws crumbs at some middle-class people. Some will get a tax increase, especially those in high-tax states like New York, but his plan benefits the wealthy.

Has the President read this plan? Has he been involved in creating this plan or is it the people around him—many
of them from Wall Street—who came up with this plan, and the President doesn’t even know what it does?

I will tell you, if he goes to Indiana today and says that his plan helps the middle class rather than the wealthy, he’ll be at it backward. It helps the wealthy far more than it helps the middle class.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, yesterday the majority announced it would not be holding a vote this week on the latest healthcare bill, Graham-Cassidy. Every American should breathe a deep sigh of relief.

The majority has vowed to revisit ACA repeal, maybe even with this legislation. But President Trump and our Republican colleagues should have learned from these failures that the American people do not want to cut healthcare. If they try to do it a third time, they will fail again for the simplest reason in politics: The public is again going to do it.

This administration, which campaigned it is for the people and populist, on healthcare is doing what people don’t want and on taxes is doing what people don’t want. What is going on?

I remind my Republican colleagues that continuing to threaten repeal is like hanging a giant sword of Damocles above our Nation’s healthcare system. It causes great uncertainty in the healthcare market, and it leads insurers to hike premiums on average.

Now, I understand that for political purposes Republicans don’t want to ever admit that ACA repeal is off the table. They promised it to the American people for 7 years but deluded them on what it really meant. The average American thought that, if you took ACA off the table, premiums would go down and coverage would go up. The bills the Republicans have proposed are the opposite, but I understand why they do it. They promised it so often. But those promises have a real human consequence in the form of higher costs for everyday. The responsibility and the blame for the rate hikes, should they occur—and they probably will—will fall squarely on the Republican shoulders. President Trump and the Republicans are in charge. Saying, gee, something in the past caused it, when they failed to correct it, is not enough.

My Republican friends, you are no longer in the minority. You are running the show. It is your responsibility to help bring premiums down. We want to do that and, in fact, there are good bipartisan sprouts. Senators CASSIDY and MURRAY are very close to a bipartisan agreement. Now, we hope out of pique or anger that our Republican colleagues will not reject a good bipartisan compromise that helps the American people, put together by the chair of the HELP Committee and the ranking member.

I hope and expect the negotiations to pick up right where they left off because we Democrats want to work with our Republican colleagues to stabilize the markets and lower premiums for millions of Americans. We hope our Republican colleagues will not just sit back, repeatedly threaten repeal, and watch as millions of Americans pay higher premiums. That will be wrong substantively, and, politically, it will fall right on their shoulders.

So I hope we can have the negotiations pick up between Senators MURAY and ALEXANDER right where they left off. Each of them said they were close to an agreement before Chairman ALEXANDER was pulled away by Republican leadership.

Insurers are about to set their rates for the next year, and whether we can come together or not could be the difference between a stable market and premiums that are hundreds of dollars more expensive. So for the sake of the American people, for the sake of turning over a new leaf on healthcare, let’s stop the partisan way to shore up and improve our Nation’s healthcare.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT

Finally, Mr. President, the crisis in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Hurricanes Irma and Maria have left the islands—home to well over 3 million American citizens—hanging on for dear life. You have seen the pictures, and they are devastating. Water, food, electricity, medicine, shelter, security, the basic needs of human survival are limited and running out in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Diabetic patients who require insulin shots are unable to keep their lifesaving medicine refrigerated. Hospitals still lack power and running water. This was a catastrophe on an epic scale. It may have been one of the worst humanitarian crises within our borders.

Now, the President has a bully pulpit. More importantly, he is in direct control of the vast resources of our Federal Government—the military, the Department of Energy, FEMA, USDA, and much more. He can direct the attention of all Americans to important issues. Previous Presidents have used this platform to focus our attention on disasters that strike our country. Barack Obama did it. George Bush did it. Bill Clinton did it. George H.W. Bush did it. Ronald Reagan did it. The President can direct resources—boots on the ground and a structure to coordinate it all. But a President needs to act aggressively, comprehensively, and urgently, and some of that has been lacking with this President unfortunately.

A cursory scroll of President Trump’s Twitter feed and public comments from the past few weeks does not show him using the power of his office to focus our attention and resources in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It has been a week since the storm hit and, as I said, his Twitter feed and public comments don’t show him using the power of the office. When he mentions Puerto Rico, President Trump promotes his own administration’s efforts and implies that Puerto Rico was partially at fault for the devastation they have been suffering. The response from the administration needs to get a whole lot better.

I spoke to the Governor of Puerto Rico yesterday, and he gave me specific items that would provide immediate help. I spoke about them yesterday, and I hope the administration acts on them quickly. But most importantly, we need the administration to send us an emergency and interim aid package to pass, just as we did in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands shouldn’t have to wait a second longer for aid than any other American State or Territory. We should take up and pass this package here in the Senate before the week is over.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, first I want to join the Democratic leader in his comments about the devastation of these hurricanes. They are truly a malign visitation on our country over the last several weeks. Florida, Texas, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico have really suffered and are suffering. I know that the administration is working hard on this, and I commend them for the efforts that they have made.

I think that now much of our attention is turning to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in order to mitigate what is really a humanitarian disaster. One difference between those islands and Florida and Texas is the fact that they are islands. It is harder to get there. It is harder to get aid there. I understand that just this morning the San Juan airport was open for the first time, and it has opened in a limited way.

So this is clearly a responsibility that we have as Senators, as Members of Congress, and as Americans to reach out to our neighbors in a situation such as this. When a crisis hits, it often calls forth the best of America, and I believe that is happening right now.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. President, I want to talk about a different kind of hurricane, a slow-motion hurricane. It is a slow-motion hurricane that sweeps through our entire country, not just the Southeast. It is sweeping through our small towns, our cities, our families, and our schools. It is taking lives on a scale that is unprecedented and almost unthinkable.

I am talking about the hurricane epidemic of opioid abuse and overdose deaths. Many of us this week are watching with rapt attention Ken Burns’ magnificent study of the Vietnam war. We are losing more people per year to overdose deaths than were lost in the entire Vietnam war. That is one way to think about the magnitude of this catastrophe that is striking our country. The problem is that it strikes...
here and there. It strikes a family here and a family there, a community here and a community there, but it doesn’t strike all in one place. So it is not so apparent.

If we were losing a small city in America, 63,000 people once a year, we would be turning ourselves inside out to solve the problem that was causing those deaths, and 63,000 people were killed last year through overdose deaths. It was almost 400 in my State of Maine. That is more than one a day. All in the same way that good living—one a day. Now, 63,000 is about 7 people an hour—24 hours a day, 365 days a year—who are succumbing to this plague. That is the right term for it. It is a medieval plague that is affecting people all over our country.

Lives are lost, families torn apart, and our communities compromised. It is a huge cost. I hesitate to talk about things like dollars when you are also talking about lives, but it is a cost in both ways. Not only are lives being lost and families being torn apart, but the estimates are that it costs our society something over $400 billion a year in everything from medical costs and criminal justice costs to lost economic and human productivity in our society and our economy.

But I am here today because all hope is not lost. Contrary to what some people hear—and you hear sometimes that this is hopeless and that there isn’t anything you can do about it—there is ample evidence that treatment can work. This is not a death sentence. Opioid abuse is terrible, and from talking to people who have suffered from it, it literally changes your brain, and it becomes almost impossible to escape. But it can be escaped. The reason we know that is because of my friends in Maine—Andrew, Matt, and Chris.

Andrew was one of the people whom I have interacted with, and with whom I have sat down. Andrew is a guy who is at the University of Southern Maine. He was trapped in the throes of addiction. He went through treatment, and now he is in recovery. Indeed, there are 25 million people in this country who are in recovery, and they will tell you that they will always be in recovery because they can never shake this disease, whether it is alcohol or the really destructive one that we are focusing on right now, which is opioids.

Andrew has made a new life. He is at school. He is at the University of Southern Maine. He has helped form a student-centered community to help people who are in recovery or who are working on getting there.

Matthew is a young man who, in 2009, again was trapped by this horrible scourge. Now he is hoping to go to medical school.

Chris is a guy who sat in my office. He worked in the White House. He was in it up to his neck and above. He had criminal justice problems. He was in jail. He was convicted. But now he is a member of the Maine State Bar Association. He got himself through school, and he got himself through law school.

There was an important moment that I think all of us should think about. There was a serious person who is in this situation. When we went to apply to law school, the people at the law school said: Well, we don’t know if we can take you because you have this record.

His question, which was brilliant and indicates to me that he is going to be a pretty good lawyer, was this: What was my sentence when I was convicted? The response was 3 years. He said: You are putting me in for life. If you don’t let me move forward with my life, you are making that a life sentence, not a 3-year sentence. He was accepted to law school. He graduated, and this year he passed and was accepted in the Maine State Bar Association. He is making a contribution to his community.

Treatment can work. It doesn’t always work the first time. Anybody that has been through this, whether it is alcohol or even quitting smoking or anything else, will tell you that it doesn’t always work the first time. Sometimes it does, and sometimes it doesn’t. Sometimes it will take multiple trips through the recovery and treatment process, but it can work. We know it can work. I have 25 million reasons to tell you that it can work and 3 that I know.

I am going to be introducing a resolution later today—I hope the Senate can take it up and pass it—designating next month as National Recovery Month, honoring and recognizing the people who are in recovery. So if it works, what is the problem? Why is this hurricane still sweeping our country? Why does 2017 look like it is going to be worse than 2016?

Well, the sad truth is that, out of all of those millions of people who are addicted, who are stuck, who are trapped, only 1 in 10 has access to treatment—only 1 in 10. Now, what do we have to do to deal with this problem? Of course, it is like most other problems. There is no single answer. It involves law enforcement. It involves interdiction, and let me pause for a moment on interdiction. The Presiding Officer and I are both on the Armed Services Committee, and I am told to our committee that we only have the Coast Guard and Navy resources to interdict one-fourth of the drug shipments that we know of coming up from South and Central America by sea. In other words, we have intelligence where we know of 300 boats, and we can only stop 25. There is no excuse for that. So, yes, law enforcement, at the source or along the way in our States, is an absolutely essential part of this process, but it is not the whole answer. We also have to work on prevention.

Frankly, I have been talking to groups around Maine and around the country on this. We are all still trying to figure out how to make prevention work. What will work? I haven’t yet heard a really strong answer to that question. I guess it varies from person to person, but prevention has to be part of it. Treatment can work, but if only 10 people have treatment available to them or have access, that means 9 are sentenced to life and maybe to death.

Last year, a year and a half ago, we passed CARA, the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act. It is a great bill, but we have to continue to work on good things in it, but no money. That is like sending the fire department to the fire and saying: Fight that fire, but we are not going to give you any water. We know this costs money, and it is something we have to commit to. It has to be part of it.

Whatever we do around here about healthcare and about budgets, we have to realize we are losing our people, and these aren’t bad people. These aren’t people over there. I sat around a few years back in ME. Next to me was a deputy sheriff. He lost his daughter. These aren’t strangers. These are often middle-class people. These are people whose kids or sometimes parents—this is not age specific—are caught up in this scourge.

I guess I want to leave us today with two points. One is, treatment works. The second is, we need more of it. If we know something works, but only 1 in 10 people have access to it, shame on us. It is like we have a gas leak and we are not going to give money. That is like sending the fire department to a fire and saying: Fight that fire, but we are not going to give you any water. We know this costs money, and it is something we have to commit to. It has to be part of it.

So this is a different kind of hurricane, but it is a hurricane, nonetheless, that is destroying our families, destroying our communities, and wrecking the lives of our friends, but it is no act of God. We can’t stop the winds of Maria or Irma, but we can mitigate the effects, ameliorate the effects, soften the effects. That is exactly what we need to do for those who are victims of the hurricane of opioids that is sweeping our country.

I hope and believe we will respond to this challenge as we have at other times in our history, and, indeed, as we are this week to those situations of the Caribbean. I want to respond also to the hurricane that is sweeping America that we can, indeed, ameliorate, mitigate, and soften.

Thank you, Mr. President.
The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF AJIT PAI

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise to strongly oppose the nomination of Ajit Pai to serve a second term as Chairman of the FCC.

Since taking over the FCC leadership in January, Chairman Pai wasted no time moving the agency away from its key mission to promote the use and deployment of communications in the public interest. For example, he has been involved in dismantling the rules that preserve the diversity of content in media ownership, potentially negatively impacting forever the number and variety of voices in the media market.

In addition, his confirmation to this important position will also have a negative impact on one of the most important issues, I believe, of our time; that is, preserving net neutrality. A strong and open internet is key to an economy of the future—to promoting an environment for innovation and facilitating the creative jobs that are going to come along with an open internet architecture.

Chairman Pai is poised to undo the bedrock principles that are already in place to protect an open internet. Even in the face of evidence that these rules are important to an internet economy and millions of jobs, he is determined to try to rewrite them.

On Monday, the Senate will vote on whether to confirm Ajit Pai for another term as Chairman of the FCC. As I have said, I think his leadership has shown that on net neutrality, he believes the rules should be changed. As long as he continues to hold that position, I cannot support his nomination.

As the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, he has demonstrated disdain for the important public interest principles he is supposed to be upholding. He shows a disregard for the innovators in America that are striving to build the economy of the future. The public interest mission of the FCC is encoded in the agency’s DNA. The law that created the FCC clearly states that the agency’s mission is to promote an open internet. Every access to communications networks for all people around the United States. This means the FCC has the responsibility to promote the expansion of communications networks and to ensure they have the incentive and ability to compete fairly with one another in providing broadband services. The mission does not include letting a big telecom company or cable company run over small businesses or consumers and saying to them: Unless you pay me more, I will give you inferior or more limited services. Imagine if that happened to the telephone industry decades ago, if you couldn’t get access because someone had decided, “I’m going to let the highest bidder rule the roost.”

The President’s nomination of Pai and his desire to have him continue as Chair continues to show a desire to undermine the internet and the internet economy. As I have pointed out, Chairman Pai announced his intention, as Chairman, to go against the demands of American consumers and reverse the rules that are already on the books to protect consumers. Chairman Pai wants to allow the big telecom and cable companies to erect toll lanes that would further burden the nature of the internet and innovation that its economy supports. He plans to go against more than 10 million American consumers and innovators who have told him to keep the internet open and free.

Recent studies have shown that the internet economy is now over 7 percent of U.S. GDP, it employs 7 million people and is worth a trillion dollars. Our entrepreneurs, workers, and without question, have helped keep that economic growth. Our economy is in a massive technological transformation. It is in an information age, and in an information age, making sure you have an open and equal internet to be key to continuing to grow business.

Every business plan of every startup relies on the ability of consumers to get equal access to content. Large, as a result of the innovations, the open internet has created tens of thousands of tech jobs in the United States. The internet economy is almost a trillion dollars, and at 7 percent of GDP, it is growing faster and stronger than many other sectors, including construction, mining, utilities, agriculture, education, and entertainment.

It is disturbing to me that Chairman Pai has made it clear he wants to rewrite the rules that protect those businesses and create an artificial fast and slow lane. Are businesses going to say to the consumer: You have to pay more if you want a fast lane, you better pay me more money.” We can’t afford to do that for all the internet applications and all the small businesses that are continuing to work on growing our economy. We need to make sure that instead of shedding jobs in the United States, as we did in the last economic downturn, that we are creating jobs and creating power for consumers.

We have seen what has been termed the “app economy,” which consists of everybody who makes money has a job thanks to a mobile app that was also powered by the internet. Today, 1.7 million Americans have jobs because of that economy. Nearly 92,000 of them are in the State of Washington. Over the last 5 years, that app economy and those jobs have grown at an annual rate of 30 percent. The average growth rate for all other jobs is 1.6 percent. So, literally, Chairman Pai is trying to clog the arteries of one of the fastest growing economic opportunities in America.

By 2020, the app economy is estimated to grow to over $100 billion. This demonstrates that the internet economy is a dynamic, supercharged, job-creating engine, with economic growth that should not be artificially slowed down because some industries believe they have the right to do so.

These facts, and making sure we protect an open internet, are why we should not support Chairman Pai.

The slow lanes and the fast lanes are not like a highway where a consumer can take another route or plan another course. Here, you are creating barriers that are wedges between businesses and their consumers, between doctors and their patients, between industry solution providers and the customers that they are trying to serve.

The growth of the internet platform for economic activity is something we do not want to see destroyed, and Chairman Pai’s dismantling of that robust internet architecture and the support of innovators is extremely troubling to me.

I think about all the internet applications that I have seen in my State, whether it is a business like McKinstry that provides building efficiencies to school districts all over our State and in Puget Sound. Let’s pretend now that McKinstry, which is trying to tell North Shore School District that they are using too much power could reduce their costs by just doing simple things—but now, all of a sudden, because the net neutrality rules go away, McKinstry has to charge that school district more if they want to get that information to them on time. A closed artery could shut down information to that school district when it is needed in time to make an adjustment.

Let’s talk about a doctor in a rural area who receives information about a patient who comes into their emergency room but wants a consult with a doctor in Seattle, and all of a sudden, now their connectivity is slowed down unless they pay more money.

I also think about the issue in the context of just some very everyday ways we experience the impact of an open internet. Like people going to get coffee. In my State, they will now preorder. They go online, and then they show up to get their coffee—all so they can avoid the long lines. But now, all of a sudden, if net neutrality goes away, is that going to mean another charge or, an extra toll, just to get consumers connected to the coffee shop so they can avoid the long line? Are cable companies and internet service providers going to say to the consumer: You have to pay more if you want a fast lane.

What Chairman Pai doesn’t realize is that the internet is now a full-blown ecosystem with many attachments; that the internet is like the artery system that connects it all and connects it in so many ways beyond even our imagination. Yet he is proposing to clog these arteries, to hold us ransom if only we will tell a cable company it is OK to charge the American consumer more.
We cannot afford to ruin the internet economy by doing this. We need to have an open internet architecture that allows everybody to access this information at the same time and the same rate so that we can continue to innovate.

There are ways to grow the internet and grow internet investment in the delivery system. In fact, during the time period of the open internet rules, we have seen just that—a continued investment. So we do not now have to rewrite the rules. We do not now have to throw a roadblock, a hurdle, a clogging of the arteries at the small business and internet economy that is growing so rapidly with all its devices.

God forbid that one of our colleagues would be on the other side of town and get a delayed message about when a vote started just because we in the Senate hadn’t bought a higher, faster speed lane, and maybe they would miss a vote. It is hard to say what slowing down means for those who artificially would do because it is so connected to everything we do today, and that is why we have to stop this from happening.

I would be happy to hear that Chairman Pai has decided to drop his insistence of change the rules of an open internet. If he did that, I might think differently about his nomination. But until then I will continue to fight for my State’s economy, which depends so greatly on net neutrality, and continue to fight for the millions of consumers around the United States who are trying to grow what are smarter, more intelligent, more cost-effective businesses.

Even the healthcare debate we just had is instructive on the issues of net neutrality—I believe in home healthcare. I believe we can implement it and drive down costs. But if you are telling a patient that they might not get the information back from their doctor because he cannot afford a fast internet connection that the cable companies are charging, then I guarantee my colleagues we are not going to reduce our healthcare costs.

So, please, I say to my colleagues, you will not have another chance at this. You will hear from your constituents about this issue, and you will not be able to take back this vote. Please make sure you understand that Chairman Pai is marching ahead on a very different anti-consumer road, and because we are not going to do for someone who is going to slow down and clog the internet.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on Chairman Pai’s nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

TAX REFORM

Mr. CORKYN. Mr. President, today I would like to talk about a topic that most of us don’t want to discuss, and that is taxes, except today is different. This time, you don’t have to groan over spreadsheets and calculations or worry about how much of your hard-earned pay you are going to have to send to Uncle Sam. Today, leaders in the House and in the Senate will unveil their core principles for tax reform. The President will travel with our colleagues Senator Orrin Hatch and his support for these core principles.

Taxes can be confounding and complicated and painful to deliberate, but let’s face the facts, what I believe deliberates our personal lives and pushes our more take-home pay, and that works for everybody. In other words, you actually reduce your living costs because Uncle Sam takes less of your paycheck, meaning you get to keep more of it and take that home and spend it on things that you would prefer to spend it on. So more take-home pay is our bottom line.

I look forward to working with the chairman of the Finance Committee, and Speaker Ryan and Chairman Kevin Brady of the House Ways and Means Committee—another good Texan—on their ideas, which I know were born from many long hours and tough conversations.

But this is going to be a national conversation, starting with the President kicking this off this afternoon in Indiana. He is going to invite the American people to express their views on what tax reform should look like.

For me, in addition to more take-home pay, I am looking for a tax code which is shorter, simpler, and which makes us more competitive in the global economy.

It is a great relief, believe me, to have a President who understands how taxes and the uncertainty they place on job creators stifles economic growth. The reason economic growth is so important is that when the economy grows, more jobs are created, and for the jobs that exist, the people who have them will actually earn more money and be able to pursue their dreams.

Just as importantly, though, this President understands that the job creator is not the enemy. A former colleague of ours, Gordon Smith from Oregon, once told me that the problem with some of our Democratic friends is that they claim to love the worker, but they hate the job creator. To me, that sort of summarized it pretty well. I know he didn’t mean “hate” in the traditional sense, but he did mean Congress is not going to get those folks on the Democratic side—likes to implement additional burdens, such as higher taxes or more regulation, more obstacles in the way of our job creators, when we should be tearing down those walls, lowering taxes so that they can be successful, and in the process, we can all succeed. Well, this President understands that our economy, too, is crucial but extremely fragile, and he joins all of us in loving the American people and everything he can, and everything we can, to ensure that we continue to be the strongest economy in the world.

Here is why tax reform is so important in the first place. In the words of Arthur Brooks of the American Enterprise Institute, the American Founders promised not just happiness but the pursuit of happiness. That is, of course, in the Declaration of Independence. I think this is a good way of putting it. It means that all of us, based on our country’s original vision, should be free to follow our dreams without government getting in our way or making our burdens heavy. We should be free to pursue happiness.

Average American citizens should not be numbed or stifled by mandatory participation in a system that depletes their energy and discourages them, and that is what our Tax Code does today. It exhausts people when it comes to fully complying with our arcane and convoluted and complex laws because they go to the Federal tax people simply outsource that by hiring some lawyer or some accountant to prepare their taxes because it is so complex. We can do better than that. We can make it simpler and fairer and flatter.

Today, many of the obstacles that exist prevent the average American from pursuing their dreams and reaching their full potential, which ought to be what joins us all together. One of those is an outdated and highly convoluted tax system that actually penalizes hard work, stymies ingenuity, and enriches the lawyers and accountants that people have to hire in order to just comply with all of its convoluted complexity costs. Call this the terrible treadmill of taxes. It zaps our energy rather than unleashing it. It erodes our work ethic, because if you work harder and harder only to see more and more of what you have earned pay you are going to have to send to Uncle Sam. Today, leaders in the House and in the Senate will unveil a blueprint for reform, has been to protect American jobs and make the Tax Code simpler, fairer, and lower for average American families.

In a sense, it is all about putting families first. Families build individuals, and families mold character. We have to give every opportunity to families who need to thrive. We have to keep the unlimited guest of government away from the front door, constantly bargaining for more, more, and more, and more attention, and constantly throwing a wrench into their plans.

I also believe we should provide tax relief for small businesses because small business is the engine of our economy. It is not the Fortune 500 that creates the vast percentage of jobs in this country. It is small businesses, which often face an unwieldy regulatory state. We should lower taxes for all American businesses so they can compete with foreign ones.

As the so-called Big 6 committee has said, the goal of any new plan should
be, first and foremost, to reduce tax rates as much as possible. Let’s make sure this “first cut is the deepest,” as the song goes, but also to place a priority on permanence, to create a system that encourages American companies to bring jobs back from overseas, along with the profits they will not bring back because they will be taxed twice, and to put more money back in the pockets of all Americans.

As Ronald Reagan said, there is one simple fact you have to keep in mind when it comes to taxes: “The problem is not that the people are taxed too little, the problem is that the Government spends too much.”

This is not just about sheer wealth. We are after but also about earned success—the ability of mothers, fathers, and families to work a long day and to keep more of their hard-earned paychecks to use as they please—to save it for their retirement, to spend it on their house, or even to dote on their children. When families are able to keep more of the money they earn, they are more inclined to take advantage of or to create their own opportunities, including new businesses. Social mobility increases and so does room for charity.

The United States is the most charitable and generous country in the world. People don’t just turn to government for help during times of need. We saw that in Hurricane Harvey and in Hurricane Irma and now in Hurricane Maria. Many, many Americans generously dip into their own resources to help provide for their fellow human beings in need during times of tragedy. It is our prosperity that comes from job creation—getting to keep more of what you earn and pay the government less—that makes that possible.

When Alexis de Tocqueville came to the United States, shortly after our country’s founding, in his book “Democracy in America,” he pointed out that one of the unique things about America—certainly much different than Europe—was the organizing and voluntary associations. These often are charitable organizations—whether they are churches or synagogues or mosques or just community organizations—that as part of their good work provide charitable benefits for our fellow man and woman. We ought to encourage that.

Of course, none of us is an island. It is not that lower tax rates translate to everyone looking out exclusively for No. 1. Oftentimes, that is the way our friends across the aisle will depict lowering taxes. They say: You are lowering taxes for the rich.

We want to lower taxes for everybody—not because it benefits an individual but because it benefits the country and it benefits all Americans. It makes us more competitive globally. It creates more jobs and opportunities for Americans who are looking for those jobs here at home. It creates incentives for investment so that the entrepreneur can start a business, come up with a new idea, change the world, and create jobs and opportunities for other people at the same time.

We know that social obligations are still important. It is just that there are many ways of meeting them other than just cutting a big paycheck to the Federal Government. In fact, the higher taxes we pay, the easier it is for citizens to assume that, well, I have paid the Federal Government; so let the government take care of it.

That is not who we are. That is not who we have been. That is certainly not how we began. We began as a government that believed in the individuality and the importance of all individuals, and we all collectively benefit when each of us is free to pursue their dreams because that increases the productivity and the opportunities for all.

We will never become, I hope and pray, a country that says: It is the government’s job when it comes to taking care of a man or woman or a family in need. The Federal Government has a role to play, but I hope we will always be the generous sort of country that we started out to be and that we still are today, with neighbors helping neighbors.

Middle-class Americans have experienced a decade of higher taxes, more regulation, and stagnant economic growth under the last administration. It is time to break out of that cycle, and this is our time to do that.

Every American knows we can do better. If you ask them: Are your taxes hard to prepare, is it complicated, are you confused, or do you feel like the Federal Government is getting a bigger bite out of your paycheck than it should, I think you would get near unanimity that the Tax Code is too complex. The Federal Government is too voracious when it comes to taking a bite out of your paycheck, and people would welcome the ability to keep more of what they earn.

It is time for us to know that we understand the plight of hard-working American families and people of all economic levels, that we are hearing them when they say they want to keep more of the paycheck they earn and they want us to lower their cost of living by lowering the tax bite out of the paycheck they do earn.

Americans are wondering what our tax reform policies will be. For me, here are some nonnegotiable items. There must be no give-up on simplification. Job creators must be incentivized to keep well-paying jobs here at home in the United States. American competitiveness in a global economy must be increased by lowering business tax rates. The result should be a new, retooled system that will put more money in the pockets of middle-class families and reenergize our economy. It will benefit Americans in every State across the country. It will also make it possible for us to meet our other priorities.

The Federal Treasury also will benefit from more people working, earning better wages, and helping to support their government. It will make it possible for us to spend more money on our priorities, like national defense, which right now is underfunded, or medical research or other priorities that the American people may have. By delivering on these principles, we can fulfill the promise of the Declaration of Independence and many generations to come, and we can keep the promise of the Declaration of Independence that we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Ultimately, that is what we are talking about when we talk about tax reform. We shouldn’t just be wearing green eyeshades, getting out our spreadsheets, and running the numbers. This is about keeping the promise of the Declaration of Independence that we are endowed by our Creator with an unalienable right to pursue happiness.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HEALTHCARE

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, our Constitution begins with three simple words: “We the People.” The Founders wrote that in superscripted font to remind us that this is what our Nation is all about. It is not about the privileged. It is not the elite. It is not to make the wealthy wealthier. It is not to add more to the abundance of those who already have much. It is to establish government that reflects the will of the people or, as President Lincoln put it, “of the people, by the people, for the people.”

In this age where vast sums are spent on campaigns by a few billionaires to basically substitute government of, by, and for the people with government of, by, and for the powerful, we have an enormous challenge to maintain the integrity of the mission of our Constitution and the responsibility of this Senate.

We probably haven’t seen a challenge to “we the people” in years like the equivalent of TrumpCare. Certainly, it is designed to plan for massive tax giveaways to the wealthiest Americans of hundreds of billions of dollars and to rip healthcare away from 20 to 30 million ordinary working families.

What a travesty that is of our responsibility under our Constitution. What an amazingly misguided effort to do damage, rather than to assist and provide a foundation for families to thrive by.

A few years ago, a woman came up to me at a fundraiser for multiple sclerosis—a walk—and she said: Things are so different this year, Senator, than they were last year. I asked her: How so?

She said: A year ago, if our loved one was diagnosed with MS and they had
insurance, they were likely to have an annual cap or a lifetime cap and run out of coverage.

That was a terrible situation to be in because MS is a mysterious and expensive disease.

She said: If the individual didn’t have insurance, they now had a preexisting condition, and they wouldn’t be able to get insurance.

She said: Now, we have the peace of mind that if our child or our loved one becomes ill, if our child or our loved one becomes ill, he or she will get the care they need.

Isn’t that the summary of what we should be seeking in our healthcare system—the peace of mind that if our child or our loved one becomes ill, if our child or our loved one becomes ill, he or she will get the care they need? Shouldn’t that be what we are fighting for?

Instead, we had the opposite. We had the TrumpCare bill that was designed to rip away the peace of mind, trample all over peace of mind so the wealthy could have more giveaways from the Federal Treasury.

We had that House bill, and it was estimated that 23 million people would lose healthcare over 10 years and that our hospitals and our clinics would have a lot less funding to be able to provide care to everyone. Yet it passed the House. Then President Trump got briefed on what was in the bill after he held a campaign party at the White House and celebrated its passage. He said: Oh, wait. This bill is mean and heartless.

Over here in the Senate, the Senate’s secret 13 went to work to try to produce a bill without holding any public hearings or having any discussions with stakeholders. They were secreted away in a room, and no one could find out where they were in order to be able to offer any insights. They did not hold any town hall meetings, they did not hold any back home, and they had no meetings here. The public was totally blocked out. The secret 13, amazingly, came up with an almost identical bill to the House bill. Oh, the estimate was instead, maybe, of there being 23 million people who would lose insurance, 22 million people would lose insurance. Fortunately, the secret 13 bill was defeated—but just barely—here in this Chamber.

Then came another version of this called the alt-ACA insurance bill. This fake insurance version said: Hey, let’s let the insurance companies put out policies that are really, really cheap but that do not actually cover anything. Won’t that make us feel good that everyone in America will be able to afford a policy that only costs $40 or $50 a month.

Of course, fake insurance is fake; that is, when you go to the emergency room, it does not cover the visit. When you get a blood test, it does not cover the blood test. When you get an X-ray or an MRI, it does not pay for it. Oh, don’t even begin to think about its covering hospitalization or any other nor-

mal medical service because it is fake insurance. The fake insurance bill failed by a few votes on the Senate floor.

Then we had repeal without replacement, and that failed. Then we had the skinny bill, and that failed by a single vote.

How is it possible that we came that close to passing a bill that is completely the opposite of the vision of our Constitution—to legislate for the foundation of our society for all people, not the American privileged and not the American powerful. Yet it came within a vote of passing.

This week, we have the block grant version—the block grant version that proceeds to destroy immediately the exchanges, the healthcare marketplaces. Of course, the great irony is, that was the Republican idea: Let’s create a marketplace within which people can compare individual policies, pick the ones best for their families, and get tax credits to be able to buy them. So the Republicans came out against their own plan.

In addition, it wiped out Medicaid expansion. In my home State of Oregon, the exchange is responsible for roughly 500,000 people gaining access to healthcare, the marketplace, and 400,000 people gaining access through Medicaid expansion. There are a half a million Americans in just my State, my humble State of Oregon. Yet here was a bill that was not going to do care. We are going to wipe out healthcare for a half a million Oregonians and untold millions across the country—20 to 30 million across the country.

We owe a big thank-you to grassroots America. We owe a big thank-you to ordinary citizens who believe in the vision of this country. They proceeded to connect with Capitol Hill—to fill the streets and to flood the phones and to overflow our inboxes—saying: What are you doing? Please stop trying to destroy the peace of mind of Americans. They said: Make healthcare work better, not worse.

Is that really too much for us to ask? As we ponder how to make healthcare work better, those in grassroots America have expressed a lot of ideas. They have said: We have a really complicated system that creates all kinds of obstacles for ordinary families, for working families.

For example, whether you have a job that provides you with insurance and your family with insurance but then the company changes the policy and only covers you. How are you going to get your children covered? Are you going to be able to get them through right away in the Children’s Health Insurance Program? How do you go about doing that?

Then your employer says: By the way, you now have to start paying us in order for us to provide you with healthcare.

You say: Wow! That is a huge chunk out of my check. Can I possibly afford that and still pay my rent? Am I going to have to choose between healthcare and homelessness? It is not a choice families should have to make.

Then, perhaps, people are working several part-time jobs, and their employers have no healthcare programs at all. So they sign up for the Oregon Health Plan or the equivalent Medicaid plan across the country. They might like that, but it is complicated to apply, and they have to reapply periodically. What happens if their incomes go up just a little, and now they are over the line? Is that fair? As a result of being over the line, they now have to go back into the individual markets. How do you do that in the middle of the year when it is not an open enrollment period?

There is such complexity, such difficulty. That is why it is so appealing to think about the vision of a seamless, simple healthcare program that you have that will provide quality healthcare when you need it—portable across states—just being an American. That is a beautiful vision, and it is not out of reach. Every other developed country has found some version of that and made it a reality. We need to ponder as to how to make the simple system down the road, but right now we have a more immediate task.

That immediate task is to stop the sabotage of the healthcare system we have. President Trump has engaged in many maneuvers to try to force the collapse of the insurance markets. One is to withhold the cost-sharing payments from insurers so they no longer have the funds they were promised. That uncertainty has caused many companies to say: Do not count on us to be in that market in the future if we cannot count on you, the Federal Government, to honor your obligations.

Why isn’t the Senate body demanding that the President honor the obligations of those cost-sharing payments?

In addition, we have the President shutting down advertising during the open period so people will not know they can sign up. We have President Trump cutting the enrollment period in half. We have a plan now from the administration to cut the funds for consumer outreach and enrollment assistance, which enables folks who need to get healthcare to find out how they can actually get through the complicated application process.

Most recently, the administration announced it is actually going to shut down the website periodically on weekends during the open enrollment period, which is when people will have the time and effort to try to force them to apply. They are going to shut down the website so people will not be able to apply during portions of the weekend.

All of us should unite—100 Senators should unite—and tell President Trump: Enough of this sabotage. If you want to drive up insurance policies by 20 percent over any other increase they might otherwise have and if you want
to be responsible for millions of people not gaining access because of your irresponsibility, then we are going to hold you accountable for it. Everybody in grassroots America is going to hold you accountable for it.

Fortunately, we have a bipartisan process that has been underway to remedy these conditions. I, profoundly, thank LAMAR ALEXANDER, chair of the HELP Committee, and PATTY MURRAY, the ranking Democrat on the HELP Committee, for saying: Let’s have the normal, rational process that we go through to try to understand how we can improve the healthcare system.

They have held a series of hearings. They have brought in the experts, and they have brought in the stakeholders. They have done it in front of the public so the public can weigh in. They have consulted constituents and encouraged all of us to consult with our constituents and be part of that conversation. Pragmatic, experienced legislators are gaining expertise from those on the frontline so they can make the system work better. Isn’t that the way the Senate is supposed to work?

Their work shows a lot of promise. There are some very straightforward things they have heard from those experts.

They have heard we need to lock down the cost-sharing payments. No insurance companies are going to be in the insurance markets if they do not know they are going to get paid what they have been promised or they are going to raise their premiums incredibly high to cover the risk that they will not get paid. Then, of course, people will not be able to afford that insurance.

They have heard from the experts that you have to have reinsurance. If you want to have this private market-place in which people can compare policies and use tax credits to buy the policies that companies put on the market, people have to enter that market unless it has its own insurance policy against getting the disproportionate share of the really sick people. Of reinsurance, they have heard.

They have also heard we must not suppress outreach to those who need insurance but increase outreach—outreach to younger, healthier people to make sure they are part of the exchange as well as outreach to those who are often working several part-time jobs and do not have the time to focus on this question unless someone reaches out and says: Here is your opportunity. We are now in the open period. Here is how you sign up, and we can make sure you get that message.

In the hearings, they heard other things. They heard we need to do more to take on the challenge of mental illness in America. They heard we need to do more to take on drug addiction, the opioid epidemic in America.

There it is—a list of a modest number of things we could do together to make our healthcare work better. Wouldn’t that be a beautiful closing chapter to the nightmare, the repeated horror stories we have been playing in the Senate that threaten to rip the healthcare from millions of people and simply awaken from that war over healthcare and work together to address these fundamental questions.

We actually held public hearings in the HELP Committee, which we have not done before. We have actually listened to the experts, which we have not done before. We have actually encouraged people to consult with their constituents and to hide from their constituents. The result would be a significant strengthening of what we have—lower premiums as a result, more competition in the exchanges, more awareness of how to sign up, more and healthier young people getting involved in the exchanges, which means the premiums will come down.

I think, as we ponder the goal of our healthcare system—the question of peace of mind—that is our best immediate avenue to provide peace of mind, to end the sabotage of the system we have, and address the shortcomings the healthcare experts and the people of America have pointed out.

Let us be that mission statement under this vision of ‘we the people’ government, in that we pursue healthcare that is designed for the people of America in order to create peace of mind, so when their loved ones become ill or when their loved ones are injured, they will get the care they need, and they will not end up bankrupt. We should be able to make that happen.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the bill be suspended.

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, last week the Senate passed the bipartisan Defense Authorization Act. The world is a very dangerous place. This legislation is very important to keeping our country safe.

Another thing we need to do to keep America safe is to get the economy going as strong as possible in a strong and healthy economy in this country, and we need it now. A strong economy means a strong country with enough money to pay for the defense needs that we have at this time.

Over the 8 years of the Obama administration, Washington doubled its debt. Why? Because our economy grew so slowly and the administration spent too much money. If this sort of thing continues, it is going to leave America in a much more vulnerable position.

America needs a stronger economy that grows faster. To get the kind of growth we need, we are going to have to provide real tax relief for America, for hard-working families, and for the economy. That means cutting tax rates, and it means simplifying taxes for everyone. If we get this right, we are going to be able to produce more jobs, Americans will have higher wages, more take-home pay, and we will have a truly strong economy.

According to the Internal Revenue Service, Americans spend about 6 billion hours a year on taxes, just trying to prepare their taxes. Between businesses and individual families, we spend an average of 18 hours for every man, woman, and child in America, just trying to comply with Washington’s complicated tax code. The National Taxpayers Union says that the total cost of all of this is $263 billion a year. That works out to about $200 for every person in America. This is not spending that does anything productive. It is just figuring out how much tax to pay, and how to do it in a way to send it back to Washington so that we will not come knocking at your door—how to get our numbers right.

The instructions for last year’s standard 1040 tax form were 106 pages long. These are the instructions—15 different worksheets to fill out just to try to fill out the forms. The people who can deal with this level of complexity are the ones who basically can afford to hire expensive accountants and lawyers, who then take full advantage of a very complicated tax code. It penalizes hard-working Americans who can’t afford the high-priced help that helps them fill out and take full advantage of a complicated tax code.

We hear a lot about people who talk about how millionaires and billionaires are gaming the system so that they can pay less in taxes. If that is their concern, then maybe we should try to make this system simple enough that there is no system to game and everyone can understand it.

Just think about how much we could save this country if we simplify things even a little bit. All the time we could save, all the extra money in the pockets of hard-working American families—that would really help to grow the economy and do it quickly. It would also make life a lot simpler for most Americans.

If we also, at the same time as simplifying the Tax Code, lower the tax rates, that keeps even more money in people’s pockets. It gives them more money to decide what to save, what to spend, and what to invest—money they can spend going out to dinner if they choose. They can invest it if they want, and save for the future. If they actually choose to spend the money by going out to dinner, that helps the economy around the community where they live. People at the restaurants have to hire additional servers, and they will then have to pay their own bills. That is how an economy grows. That is how providing people with more money in their pockets
helps an economy become stronger and healthier. There is another important part of tax relief we need to remember. We need to be sure we solve a big problem with the taxes that not just individuals pay but businesses pay. The reason we need to do that is because many people think of businesses as big, faceless companies, but the simple fact is that these businesses actually don’t pay the taxes personally. People have to pay the taxes. That is because businesses pay taxes with money they get from their customers.

If the government says it is going to put a big tax on some company, that basically gets passed on to the workers and also to the people who buy that product. The Congressional Budget Office looked into this. Their office looked into it, and they found that more than 70 percent of the cost of corporate taxes actually comes from the people who work for these businesses. Nearly every $4 of what people spend in taxes would have ended up going back to the workers to have that money—workers who are either buying products or working within the company. Maybe it would have been better to give wages or better benefits or some other way that people would have gotten a benefit from the money that otherwise just gets collected and sent to the government.

Obviously, a big chunk of the money is from the workers, and another big chunk is from the consumers. If a family buys something, part of the price they are paying is to cover the taxes that business has to pay. The higher taxes mean higher prices for people who buy something.

The third way that people pay these business taxes is when they get paid by the people who own a share of the business. If you take a look, there are a lot of people on the other side of the aisle who like to talk about taxing the rich who own stock in companies that are all across our country. The only problem is, most of the people who actually own shares in these companies are far from rich. More than half of Americans actually own stocks in corporations that are paying these high taxes. Maybe they have an IRA, a retirement plan, a 401(k) through their work. Whatever it is, Americans who are investing for their future are also being taxed.

Some of the biggest owners of these corporations are actually the pension funds of public employees. That includes teachers, it includes firefighters. It includes people in every community around America. Taxes take away money that could make these pensions worth more. When the government takes taxes away, there is less money in the pension plans for our teachers, for our firefighters, for our first responders. So it is a real problem that these high tax rates are hurting the entire economy and hold back the entire country.

If you look at the most developed countries around the world, the United States has the highest corporate tax rate of all of them. The average tax rate of all of these major countries around the world—across the globe—is 24 percent. In the United States, it is 39 percent. It is almost double in tax rates than the average of the major countries around the world. So that is the top Federal rate, and when you include the average for State and local taxes, it gets you to 39 percent—24 percent is how far out of the ordinary American taxes have become.

It is a huge disadvantage for American companies that are trying to compete on the world stage. Frankly, the reason we are at such a disadvantage is that other countries have been cutting their tax rates over the years. There was actually a time when the U.S. tax rates were fairly low, and other countries continued to cut theirs below ours. If we are at a point that the average for developed countries around the world is at 24 percent, and the United States is at 39 percent. Places like Germany, Japan, and Canada have all cut their rates going back over the last 60, 70 years. We haven’t done it here at all. Now it is time to do it.

It is one of the reasons our economy has been stuck with the slow growth rate that we had during the Obama administration. It is what we have seen over the last 8 years—a very sluggish economy with very little growth. If we can cut corporate tax rates, personal rates, that is going to really help stimulate the economy.

People pay taxes. It is the individuals who pay the taxes that in many ways run the government. Many people I talk to in Wyoming feel, rightly so, that the problem isn’t that they are taxed too little; it is that the government takes too much. Where we are at a point where the economy going, and we can do that by simplifying and lowering the tax rates. It is true that, with taxes, people actually struggle with trying to figure them out at the kitchen table. I have talked to those folks at home. It is continually a problem—sometimes it is even the simplification, as well as how much money the government takes from them. Taxes raise prices. Taxes chip away at retirement savings that people have.

Tax relief and simplifying taxes is acceptable to most of us, and serves the interests of Americans as best we can.

Senator MCCAIN also said: I hope that in the months ahead, we can join with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to arrive at a compromise solution that is acceptable to most of us, and serves the interests of Americans as best we can.

Senator MCCAIN is right. Fixing and improving our healthcare system cannot be done on a partisan basis. When it has been attempted to turn big bills into law on a narrow party-line basis, the results are often not sustainable. That is why we have work to do together, because this issue of providing America’s healthcare is too complex, too big, and too important for us to do with only one wing or one party. I was encouraged as were many colleagues, Republican and Democratic, when Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY, the Republican and Democratic leaders of the Senate Health and Education Committee, held bipartisan hearings. They brought in Governors, insurance commissioners, healthcare experts, physicians, and hospital leaders from across the country to talk about what we need to do short term and long term to stabilize healthcare markets and to lay the foundation for improvements to our healthcare system.

So let’s listen to Senator MCCAIN. Let’s give that bipartisan effort another chance. Let’s work together and do this business of making America richer. I ride the train back and forth almost every day from Wilmington to Washington, and the Delawareans I hear from on that train or at home in the grocery store are plain and my State are implored of Congress fighting endless partisan battles with their healthcare. And it is not just frustrating to hear about on television; we
know for a fact that uncertainty in the healthcare markets is causing premiums to go up for Americans all over the country. The CEO of Highmark, which is the sole provider of individual market health insurance to the ACA marketplace, now confirmed to me that half of the rate increase for this coming year was due to uncertainty about whether the Trump administration would continue to enforce the individual mandate, to make the CSR payments, and other things that are part of the ACA.

So today, recognizing that the only way this gets fixed in such a closely divided and partisan Senate is if we work together, I would like to commit again to my constituents and colleagues that I am willing to work to find bipartisan solutions to our healthcare problems.

Let’s sit down together, and let’s bring in organizations like the AARP, the American Cancer Society, the Hospital Association, and let’s listen. Let’s listen to them, to healthcare leaders, and to patient advocates, and frankly I think we should listen to thousands of faith leaders from across the country as well. We have received letters—all of us as a body—from leaders of the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and Buddhist communities across our country. They jointly wrote a letter to Congress urging us to reject the Graham-Cassidy bill and to immediately address urgent matters that are right in front of us. Let’s do the hard work to do.

The next one is CHIP reauthorization. CHIP—the Children’s Health Insurance Program—serves nearly 9 million American children, 17,000 in Delaware alone, and it is going to expire. There are a lot of Federal health programs that expire at the end of this week: the Children’s Health Insurance Program, the Community Health Center Fund, which provides access to cost-effective primary and preventive care to 20 million patients throughout the country; the teaching health centers funding; the special diabetes program. There is a whole list of healthcare-related programs that expire at the end of this week. So I think we need a sense of urgency. We need a sense of urgency to find ways to work together in the short term to stabilize the market, to extend these programs, such as CHIP, that have long enjoyed bipartisan support and to begin the process of showing flexibility and compromise by both parties.

First, as I said, we have to stabilize the individual ACA marketplace. Fortunately, we know how to do that. As I mentioned, there have already been hearings in which testimony was received from Governors, insurance commissioners, healthcare experts, and they said the No. 1 priority was funding the ACA cost-sharing reduction subsidies, or CSR payments. That is something the Trump administration can do today. The individual mandate can only announce that they will continue to meet the law and make those payments. At least in my State, that will reduce the rate of increase of individual insurance premiums by a significant percentage.

We can also work together to establish a reinsurance program, to support enrollment outreach activities, and to improve the risk pool. All of this would translate to lower premiums. As I said, the President is already authorized under the ACA to take a few of these steps and stabilize the marketplace.

From there, we are going to have to find bipartisan ways that we can make this a more workable system. I have introduced legislation in the past to make the ACA small business tax credits more affordable, and there are small businesses I have heard from in Delaware, many of which can’t afford the increased costs of the Affordable Care Act.

There are ways we can work together to reduce the reporting requirements so they are less burdensome to employers. I introduced a bill on that in the last Congress and would welcome a chance to work with a Republican colleague to introduce and pass that legislation now.

We could also look at ways to make the tax credits—or the way that subsidies are provided through the ACA—both more affordable and more sustainable, so that families who qualify aren’t caught in a situation where they qualify for tax credits, but they are nowhere near enough to afford comprehensive insurance.

We also have to have a hard, bipartisan look at what is driving up healthcare costs. The bottom line to all of this is that we must work together to return to regular order and to give these programs the certainty they need to serve patients across the country and our constituents at home.

In my view, the Affordable Care Act has helped millions of Americans live healthier, safer, more secure lives. Repealing and replacing it wholesale would have been very harmful to millions of Americans. But that doesn’t mean the ACA is perfect. There is hard work to do. Compromise is needed on both sides. And I think the call that Senator McCain has issued to this Chamber is one we should hear.

So let’s work together. Let’s listen to our constituents. Let’s listen to faith leaders. Let’s listen to doctors and healthcare experts. Let’s do the hard work and together improve, not tear down, our healthcare system.

Thank you.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order of the quorum call be rescinded.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I may I bid a public farewell to Emilynder Enderle, who is here with me and who has served as the very capable and busy environment unit for quite some time now. She is going on to another role in Washington and will continue to serve our cause. She has done an amazing job, and I want to be sure to say that on what will be her last day in this office, much to me for one of our “Time to Wake Up” speeches.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, I have spoken before, as you know, about the fossil fuel industry’s persistent effort to undermine public understanding of climate change and to confuse people about the actual effects of carbon pollution on our atmosphere and oceans.

I have mentioned Drexel University Professor Robert Brulle’s follow-the-money analysis, which reveals the complex network of organizations and funding—what we have called the web of denial—that is designed to obscure the fossil fuel industry’s fingerprints in perpetuating the fossil fuel industry’s climate denial.

Dr. Brulle calls this a “deliberate and organized effort to misdirect the public discussion and distort the public’s understanding of climate.” That is what this industry is up to.

One front group for that industry is called the Heartland Institute. It is a nice name, but they are not very nice people. For decades, the Heartland Institute has played a prominent role disseminating alternative facts and fake science at the behest of its industry funders. They have a long history of doing the bidding of industry funders. In the 1990s, it was teamed up with Philip Morris to challenge the facts of the tobacco industry’s climate denial.

Using the same tactics—along with funding from the Koch Family Foundations, ExxonMobil, and other fossil fuel interests—it undermines public confidence in the established scientific consensus about climate change. Heartland is quite shameless in its methods, once sponsoring a billboard comparing those who accept the science of global warming to the Unabomber.

For my 180th “Time to Wake Up” speech, I would like to explore the Heartland Institute’s latest gambit, which is to airdrop climate denial propaganda directly into children’s classrooms.

This spring, Heartland delivered packages to hundreds of thousands of K-12 and college-level science teachers across the country. These materials were designed to have a veneer of credibility. Each one was stamped with a green and white logo, with the Heartland Institute’s latest gambit, which is to airdrop climate denial propaganda directly into children’s classrooms:

This spring, Heartland delivered packages to hundreds of thousands of K-12 and college-level science teachers across the country. These materials were designed to have a veneer of credibility. Each one was stamped with the headline “Study: Science Teachers need a Balanced Education on Climate Change.” This intriguing story was attributed to something called Environment & Climate News.
Inside the package, the teachers found a report titled “Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming.” It was issued by something called the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change. As a bonus, each teacher received a DVD copy of the “History of Climate Change in Greenland,” produced by Idea Channel.

A cover letter from Heartland’s Center for Transforming Education—transforming education into propaganda, I assume—is how that sentence gets finished. The letter reads: “to “consider the possibility” the science of climate change isn’t settled.”

That is the package they got. Let’s look behind that veneer. When you do, the smell gets pretty rotten. It turns out that the Environment & Climate News is not actually news. It is not a news outlet. It is the monthly newsletter of, guess who—best the Heartland Institute. They are citing themselves, masquerading their newsletter as a news outlet for the package they got. Let’s believe it or not—Philip Morris front groups.

Their Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change sounds like it is run by authority: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The actual Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is a United Nations-sanctioned, Nobel Prize-winning scientific body that reports the findings of thousands of climate scientists from hundreds of countries. The Heartland group—this so-called Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change—is a misleading decry designed to mimic the real science.

The three experts who wrote the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change report Heartland pushed out do not have degrees in climate change modeling, do not having degrees in climate science. All are paid by Heartland. All their claims have been repeatedly debunked by real science.

There is one faint hint of accuracy in this propaganda publication Heartland put out. They actually cited the Denmark’s called Idea Channel. However, the Idea Channel DVD in the Heartland packet has nothing to do with that series. It was actually produced by something called the Free To Choose Network. Its DVD was released by a film group called Idea Channel. However, the Idea Channel DVD in the Heartland packet has nothing to do with that. It was actually produced by something called the Free To Choose Network. Its DVD was released by a film group called Idea Channel.

One of the tricks of Heartland’s little scheme was to dupe legitimate scientists into participating. One of the experts reviewed, Reuben Osterburg, the curator at Greenland’s Narsaqs Museum, was told she was participating in a video about Norse history for the Discovery Channel. When she found out what she had been duped into, she said: “I am somewhat horrified.”

Other participants are frequent fliers in the climate denial circus, like Willie Soon, who received over a million dollars in funding from the Koch brothers, the American Petroleum Institute, ExxonMobil, and other fossil fuel interests. The year the video was released, Willie Soon received nearly $20,000 from Free To Choose.

The Heartland cover letter asked teachers to “consider the possibility” the science of climate change isn’t settled. Even that is not true. This echoes the infamous Big Tobacco declaration, “Doubt is our product.” The heart of the fossil fuel industry’s scheme is to undermine legitimate science with false doubts. Because of the financial stakes behind industry science denial and because of the communications advantages propaganda has over real science—you don’t need to waste a lot of time in peer review, for instance—you go straight to the networks—this scheme is a real problem for institutions like our schools that cherish and support real science.

All this masquerade and subterfuge by Heartland Institute looked a lot like fraud. Senators SCHATZ, WARREN, MARKEY, and I wrote to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to ask whether DeVos and her staff at the Department of Education helped or coordinated with the Heartland Institute on this scheme to pollute our classrooms with phony science.

That simple request drew quite the response from our friends at the Heartland Institute. “Your letter is a monumental misuse of your office and a betrayal of the trust of your constituents,” wrote Heartland CEO Joseph Bast. He called our letter “defamatory” and “despicable.” “Shame, shame, shame,” he proclaimed in bold font—this, unironically, from that same classy group that put up the billboards comparing anyone who accepts climate science to the Unabomber, just to give you an idea of their level of shame.

Even that little outburst is considerably nicer than in 2015 when Bast called some of us “fascists” and “ethically challenged . . . mental midgets.” Why is the Heartland Institute so very touchy? We obviously hit a nerve.

That is the heartland that pretend their stuff is coming through an Idea Channel that it isn’t, that mimic the name of real organizations to try to fool people, that pretend their newsletter is real news and package the whole thing up as if it is intended to be helpful to teachers face an uphill battle against informed educators.

Science students from Brenda Dillmann’s class at South Kingstown High School planted grass on the Narrows River salt marsh as a major unit on climate. During the lessons, the students learned about the role that salt marshes play as carbon sinks—absorbent carbon from the atmosphere. They planted 35,000 seedlings of 3 different types of salt marsh grasses.

Since 2007, more than 500 students have become climate experts in Kara Ratigan and Renee Hadfield’s fourth grade class at James H. Eldredge Elementary School in East Greenwich. Ratigan and Hadfield have developed a curriculum that integrates climate change across all subject areas. For the kids, the year begins with a visit to a local living facility, where students pair up with a senior buddy. The students interview their senior buddies, asking how the climate has
Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, we are looking at an outline for tax reform that helps working families in ways that those families haven’t seen for almost a decade now—a decade of buying power gone up and obligations that did, with more government requirements and less take-home pay. So we are going to be here for the next few weeks talking about what we can do to reverse that situation so that the opportunity for those families is reversed and that ever to reverse our competitiveness so that we create better jobs.

There are two ways to get more take-home pay. One is for the government to take less out of it—and I am for that—and the other one is to do things in the Tax Code to make us more competitive so that there are better jobs with better pay to start with. If we combine those two things—better jobs and better pay—with the government taking less out of the paycheck, that is really where families would like to be. We are going to be here talking about this in a way that drives toward a result.

The Senator from West Virginia is here, and she is basically going to start that effort today, as we really now have enough specifics on what the Finance Committee is looking at in the Senate and the Ways and Means Committee in the House and what the President is looking at. We can begin to explain to American working families why this is the right course for them and for our country.

I am pleased to be joined here by Senator CAPITO.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you, Senator BLUNT, for your leadership.

I am excited about what we are talking about today, and I am excited for my State of West Virginia. The main thing that people in West Virginia want is a good job. A good job, with more take-home pay and a higher wage, is exceedingly important to the families I represent, so tax reform and any other policies Congress could support will enhance growth and create more job opportunities around the country.

Let me focus on my State of West Virginia. According to the Economic Innovation Group, more than 34 percent of West Virginians are living in distressed communities. Unfortunately, that number is the third highest of any State in the country. At the same time, only 3.4 percent of West Virginians are living in prosperous communities.

There are States that are prosperous and have done very well, but the vast majority of our States have really struggled. Only two in five communities have seen any job growth in the past 5 years during our so-called recovery. That is not the definition of a recovery. Since 2010, fully 50 percent of U.S. job growth has occurred in just 2 percent of our country’s counties. Think about that. Economic growth has only occurred in 2 percent of the counties across this great country.

The truth is that most of our country has been mired in economic stagnation. We have been standing still. I saw Lou Holtz give a speech one time, and he said: If you are standing still, you are going backward. If you are not moving forward, you are going backward. There has been a recovery, but for many West Virginians, there has been no recovery at all.

But it isn’t all doom and gloom in our State because we have an opportunity for change—the change we really need that will help our struggling, working-class families, that changes and revitalize our distressed communities, changes that lead to economic growth and creates opportunity for future generations.

In fact, West Virginia, in the first quarter, grew by 3 percent. We were the second fastest in growth in the entire Nation. To be sure, one quarter of growth is not a trend, but it does demonstrate the potential of what we can do if we do it right here for our citizens. The potential of capital growth is there, but one of the biggest drags on our economy in recent years has been excessive regulations, which we have addressed quite a bit here in the first 9 months of President Trump’s term.

What can we do? We can reduce taxes that impede our growth. Let’s think about our small businesses. In many States, they are the major economic driver of our economy. In my State of West Virginia, 95.6 percent of the businesses are small businesses. They employ nearly half of the West Virginia private sector workforce, so nearly half of West Virginians are working in what is defined as a small business. Yet they can face a tax rate as high as 39.6 percent. Think about that. As a bakery or an accounting firm, in a 5-day workweek, you have to work Monday and Tuesday just to pay the government. It is no wonder that small businesses have found it difficult to open, let alone succeed, in many parts of our country.

The United States has the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. A lot of people are asking, how does that influence me? It is influencing how we work because the working American is bearing the brunt of that tax. Because of our outdated Tax Code, real wages for most workers have barely increased over the years. West Virginians understand that, and just as they work, the government is taking more money from them. It costs them more money every time they go to the grocery store, every time they buy clothing for their children, every time they try to buy a new car. The result is just no growth in their wages to be able to bear that expense. It feels impossible to get ahead.
We see that all around our States and localities. We see people thinking, I can't get ahead, and I haven't been able to over the last 5 to 10 years. I am starting to think it is impossible.

But we can fix this. It is not impossible. We can fix this. We can perhaps be in the conditions which there is more opportunity available and wages are higher by modifying our Tax Code. We can have a simpler system with lower rates, and families can see relief from the complexity of our Tax Code. I have seen it stacked up before. I am 3 inches, and I think it is taller than I am when stacked up page to page.

Along with the complexities, people need to keep more of their hard-earned money. It will help our companies grow. When our companies grow, what happens? We have more jobs, fairer taxes, and best of all, besides more jobs, we have higher paychecks. With more earnings, companies can hire new workers, increase wages, and invest in new things. These are changes that I think West Virginians are hungry for.

The time is now. The stagnation we have felt over the last decade has worn us down, has made us lose our optimism. We are unable to have a better life than our parents had or our children thinking they could have a better life than we had. You know, the American dream is sort of fading for a lot of people, so comprehensive tax reform can provide that kind of relief.

I am excited that we can create that environment of optimism, that environment of confidence in not just our companies and our ability to create more jobs and raise our paychecks, but that confidence that we need as a country that, yes, we can live in our communities in rural America, like West Virginia or North Carolina or Missouri, that we can live in those communities, have a great chance to move ahead, have a good retirement when we decide we are at the end of the line in terms of our working career, and also pass on to the next generation a competitive environment that can compete financially anywhere in the world.

We know we can compete anywhere in the world in a lot of different areas. Right now, we are on an uneven playing field. When we change this and when we fix this—because we can fix this—that will change the playing field for every single American who gets up in the morning and goes to work in the evening, to have the confidence that things are going to be better for them.

I thank the Senator from Missouri, and I look forward to talking about this over the next several weeks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, when the Senator from West Virginia talked about the 40 percent that can come out of your hard work, the 2 days a week of a regular workweek—and many families are wishing they could get back to a 5-day workweek because they have really been stagnant in terms of the opportunities for their families for a long time. It is a good way to think about how hard families work just so the government can get more of their money.

This is a discussion about how the government can take less of your money. For everybody listening who wonders, "Well, if the government is going to take less money—I thought the government already had a deficit!"—we need to work on that. One way to do it the right way is to work on that is to have more taxpayers—not higher tax rates but more taxpayers. We are looking at some tax changes here that would allow more taxpayers to share the burden, hopefully paying taxes, as I said earlier this afternoon, on a bigger paycheck to start with. You can take less money out of that paycheck, and the government gets more money because we have more people paying those taxes and more growth.

The 70-year average on growth since World War II is 3.4 percent. Every year, the economy was that much bigger than the year before. That ought to be achievable. For 70 years, we achieved that. We should be able to get back to growth right away on all those things. But for the last 8 to 9 years, that growth has been less than 2 percent.

Our problem is with jobs that aren't growing as they should in terms of what they pay and the government is getting. This is not about not having the money it needs to defend the country and do other things. A lot of that could be solved by an economy that is thriving again. There has been 10 years of not seeing that happen.

We combine good tax policy with good regulatory policy, which means the regulatory excesses of the last few years clearly are being brought back under control. The Federal Government is beginning to look at regulation and be sure it is common sense regulation again. Consumer confidence is growing. Every single month we look at those numbers, and they generally have been better each month than the month before. They certainly have been better the last 7 months than they were in any previous 7-month period of time for some time now. When we have a good tax policy and a good competitive policy, then before you know it, things begin to happen.

On stagnant income, you can see a study here that says, well, maybe the income hasn't gone up, but because things are a little less expensive and inflation has been so low and so many of the things families need are less expensive, they really have more money than anybody used to have. Try to explain to mothers and fathers who are trying to buy five pairs of tennis shoes for five kids. You as a parent are trying to do something for your family every week or so that is a little bit extraordinary. If you don't have extra money, you cannot do any of that.

Over 75 percent of full-time workers in America say, when asked, that they are living paycheck to paycheck. Over 20 percent of Americans say they have zero savings. A much higher number says they have less than $400 or $500 in savings. These are people whose parents and grandparents worked hard to provide for their kids, and they would like to see that ability happen again.

We need lower taxes. We need better jobs. New jobs are impacted in Missouri, where 97 percent of all our businesses are small businesses. The new job creation is created by small businesses. We ought to be sure that no matter what we do in the Tax Code, we do it in a way that allows small business to compete with big business in an effective way.

As for competitiveness, in the last 15 years, I think we are not as competitive as we used to be. Our corporate taxes used to be right in the middle. With corporations competing around the world, we are in the middle. The middle in 2003 was 30 percent; our tax rate was 35 percent. The middle in 2015 was 22 percent; our tax rate was 35 percent. If you are going to compete, if you are going to create jobs, you are going to have to be sure you know how to compete.

Mr. President, you and I were able to see—at least I was able to see—for the first time yesterday, not being on the Finance Committee, the page that is generally agreed to as our starting point. There were lower rates for families, in fact, doubling the individual exemption. Today, if you are a couple, you start paying taxes after the first $12,000 of income. Under this proposal that exemption doubles to $12,000 each, so you would start paying taxes only after you have made the first $24,000. It is sort of a new tax bracket here—the zero tax bracket. It is the tax bracket in which you don't pay into the taxes on the first $24,000, and then you start paying in a simpler system after that.

People would like the tax system to be simpler. People would like to have that postcard filing opportunity, where you say: This is how much money I made, here is my W-2 form that proves it, here is my standard exemption, and maybe, by the time you get to those three lines, your tax obligation goes away.

The amount of money people pay to get their taxes figured out in America would be the gross national product of lots of countries. We need a system that is not too complex and allows people to figure out, when the mom or dad dies, who created what wealth as you work side by side to create the wealth. By the way, you don't
have any wealth that you haven’t paid taxes on already. You don’t have anything you have accumulated that you haven’t paid taxes on multiple times. There is an opportunity here to say that we are no longer going to go through that after trying to tax families farming families. The death tax is exactly that, and it doesn’t work.

We are going to work to make America more competitive, American jobs more competitive. Again, one way to create more take-home pay—the best jobs to start with. We can have those better jobs if we work hard to be focused on competition, on regulation that makes sense, on tax policy that not only is simple but that everybody believes is fair. We have the greatest compliance of any country. I believe, in the history of the world, but people are less likely to comply if they don’t think that the tax policy is fair and easily understood and means the same to everyone else. You shouldn’t have to have the greatest accountants in the world to figure out what your taxes are or, frankly, to figure out what somebody else’s taxes likely are. Fairness is important here, simplicity is important here, and competition and better jobs are important here.

(The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore assumed the Chair.)

We need better jobs for working families. I think that should be the flag that flies highest as we begin to look at how we reduce the tax burden and increase the opportunity for more people to be paying taxes because we have more people with better jobs.

I know two of the leaders here. That guy who just left the Chair, the Senator from North Carolina, and the Senator from Georgia have been real advocates for what we are trying to do now and also advocates for getting it done. We need to have something to have this debate; we need to get this done.

In my view, this needs to be done this year. It needs to be impacting our economy by the first quarter of next year. I would suggest that nobody in this body understands the importance of competition more than the Senator from Georgia, Mr. PERDUE.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore, the Senator from Georgia.

Mr. President, I would like to echo what my esteemed colleague from Missouri has outlined in the last few minutes. His leadership on this issue is pronounced, and his experience on this floor is not to be underestimated. I appreciate his leadership on this, and I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on this.

Before my remarks today on this historic opportunity before us right now to finally, after 36 years, become competitive again with the rest of the world, I would like to preface my remarks with a personal comment. My mom and dad were schoolteachers. We were middle class. I grew up working on our family farm. My mom and dad were really the first two in their extended families who had ever been to college. All of my relatives were farmers in the South.

I think the Tax Code that we have had for too long—I was in business, it was instituted in our country, has created an imbalance. We can see right now that we are losing competitiveness with the rest of the world. We have a growing disparity among income levels in this country, borne out somewhat by the death rate, which is an archaic, out-of-control, out-of-date, and inappropriate tax policy.

Today, we have two crises in America. I have spoken on this floor a lot about this. We have a global security crisis that cannot be argued against. It is deadly. It is serious. We also have a debt crisis, and they are interwoven because of our inability to discipline ourselves on this floor over the last 30 years, particularly the last 16 years. We are at the end of it, and that is the result of an explosion in the size of our Federal Government.

In 2000, the size of our government—these are constant 2016 dollars. The size of our government in 2000 was $2.4 trillion, and that is a lot of zeros out there. I have a hard time even digesting what that is. But 2.4—I can relate to the size that it is today, and it was $4 trillion last year. So our Federal Government has grown over 80 per cent in my short years. There was one Republican President and one Democratic President. My experience here in the last 2 years has been that there are no innocent parties in terms of this out-of-control spending on the part of the Federal Government.

One of the solutions to this debt crisis is a growing economy. President Trump, from day one, has said that growing the economy is job one, but it was part of a bigger strategy in his first year.

There were four components to the strategy in the first year. One was that we had to get Neil Gorsuch confirmed to the Supreme Court, and that was done. Second, we had to roll back on some of the more onerous regulations that were stifling the very life out of the free enterprise system. To date, over 800 regulations have been removed from our government. Third was healthcare. We are still trying to fix a collapsing healthcare system. That is hurting people back home. Lastly, we had to reform our tax package so that we could become competitive with the rest of the world and get our economy going again.

Job one this year was to get the economy going again. To some degree, it is beginning to move. Consumer confidence is at a 16-year high. CEO confidence is at a 20-year high. Why? Because they finally see rhetoric in Washington talking about the things they have hoped for over 8 years, and that is relief from some of the pressure the Federal Government has put on the free enterprise system that keeps us from being competitive with the rest of the world.

I have lived around the world, and I have run businesses. I started my career working for an hourly wage in construction. I understand that American business and American industry—has some of the best workers anywhere in the world and in the history of the world. On the back of that, we have innovation, capital formation, and the rule of law. That is what has created this economic miracle over the last 36 years, but we have taken it for granted. What we have done is allow other countries because of our immigration policy, because of our tax policy, and because of our regulatory policy, particularly of late—we have lost our competitive edge.

We believe that to get this economy going, President Trump is right. I am absolutely committed to the strategy President Trump has laid out. It really is only three things, and we have already started on two with his leadership.

No. 1 is regulatory reform, which I talked about.

No. 2 is that we have to get this energy policy going. What the President has already done with the Keystone Pipeline and the Clean Power Plan has set the stage to allow us to become the energy czar, if you will, of the next century right here in North America.

Lastly—and most importantly—is to get this Tax Code so we can be competitive with the rest of the world. Let’s talk about what competitive means. In 1986, the last time we actually made any real, substantive change to the Tax Code, the United States, after those changes, had the third lowest corporate tax rate in the world. What that did is allow us to compete with the rest of the world and set the stage for the next 10 to 15 years of economic boom that is now part of history.

What has happened now, though, is that the rest of the world has caught up. They have lowered their corporate tax rates. They have simplified their regulatory environment and taken the burden off some of their people. Today, we have absolutely the highest corporate tax rate in the world, and we are the last country of the major OECD countries—the 39 countries—to actually still have a repatriation tax. This is unbelievable. We have been so arrogant as a country that we have let the rest of the world outrun us to the next stop, and they are now outcompeting us.

How does this affect the average man and woman on the street? Well, this I believe—the repatriation tax and indeed the lack of competitiveness in our Tax Code—is an absolute tax on American workers. Why? Because right now, twice as many companies in the United States are being purchased by companies outside of America compared to companies that our U.S. companies are buying outside the United States. That is nothing but a reflection on the
imbalance of our high tax environment here at home, and the people who suffer from that are the people who buy products in the United States and the people who work for companies that sell products in the United States. By companies, I am talking about friends of mine, and I have several of those— I have good friends in South Georgia and have four employees. I am also talking about friends who run large corporations, multinational corporations. All of the above contribute to our economy.

We are seeing increased acquisitions. Just look at recent history. Burger King was bought by a Canadian firm, Timmy's. Look at the beer industry in St. Louis. Today, most of those companies are owned by Brazilians and Belgians. These are not mean CEOs who decided to move their corporate headquarters, no. This is a reflection of a competitive disadvantage in which someone outside the country has used our Tax Code and our tax dollars to actually buy our companies to the detriment of U.S. workers. How can anyone be against lowering our corporate tax rate and doing away with this repatriation tax?

The Business Roundtable in 2004 documented this is interesting—that if our corporate rate today were just 20 percent, over 4,700 companies that have been purchased over the last couple of years would still be in the United States. I think that is tantamount to a marching order for us in the Senate to fix this change.

The way forward is very simple. This is what is talked about in this tax package that we are beginning to talk about publicly, and this is only after 9 months of regular order in committee with multiple hearings. We heard in the healthcare debate: Oh, this is not regular order. We didn't have the chance to talk about it and put amendments in and all this. We take a tax, it will be by regular order. There will be amendments. There will be debates. There have already been multiple hearings. We are looking for input from all corners.

This strategy has three parts: One, we have to lower this tax on our American workers—lower the corporate tax rate to be competitive with the rest of the world. Two, eliminate this repatriation tax? How can any- one be against lowering our corporate tax rate and doing away with this repatriation tax?

Nearly every CEO surveyed by the BRT, Business Roundtable, said that delays on tax would damage our economy. Here is why. We just heard the Senator from Missouri talk about timing. We have to have a sense of urgency on this for one reason: that is, if you have to wait, it will have to be done next year. For many companies, you have to get this done this year. Budgets are being finalized for next year right now. Capital investments have already been made in terms of determining how much and where and how it will be done. More importantly, during the back half of next year, we will have the holiday season, which offers up a significant portion of our retail sales for the year, and those decisions are being made right now—before the purchases that are made next spring.

We have major CEOs weighing in on this. Randall Stephenson, CEO at AT&T, said that if we get the corporate tax rate lowered, “We will step it up”—“we will step it up” on investments. “Every additional billion dollars . . . is 7,000 hardhat jobs putting fiber in the ground, cell sites up, and antennas on cell sites.”

David Abney, CEO of UPS, said: “We’d like to bring some of those foreign earnings back, invest them into our network here.”

Finally, Mark Weinberger is the CEO of one of the major accounting firms we have here in the United States. They have experience around the world in this with Ernst & Young. Actually, through these tax changes, they will stand to lose revenue because we are simplifying how people calculate what they owe in taxes. His quote is this: “I think it’s truly a bipartisan issue”—I agree— “something everybody can rally around . . . it’s urgent for our country.”

To get this done, we have to move past partisan politics and Washington games. We saw how we disappointed the American people—both sides. The Democrats in 2009 crammed ObamaCare down the throats of America through a supermajority. We now know it has failed. Republicans were not able to fix it this year, so far. So we all need to look at this tax issue as a bipartisan issue to fix this once and for all for the people back home.

We can’t get bogged down in this scorekeeping politics and Washington games. We saw how we disappointed the American people—both sides. The Democrats in 2009 crammed ObamaCare down the throats of America through a supermajority. We now know it has failed. Republicans were not able to fix it this year, so far. So we all need to look at this tax issue as a bipartisan issue to fix this once and for all for the people back home.

We have to change the Tax Code to be competitive with the rest of the world. Two, eliminate this repatriation tax?” Nearly 90 percent of Americans want the code changed. Over two-thirds think taxes are too high. Almost two-thirds say that lowering the corporate tax rate will help. They get the fact that this tax rate is lower in the rest of the world and that it is a penalty on the workers here in the United States.

My mom and dad were schoolteachers. They were proud of their ability to pay their taxes, but they were burdened by that. Right now, we don’t need to do that. We have to find a way to make this Tax Code more equitable for everyone.

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Nation. We created over 250,000 jobs and actually put North Carolina on the map by all references—CEO measures and by independent organizations. It is the State where businesses want to set up and do business.

We talked about corporate tax reform. They are for tax relief. They will come into your office and tell you: Let’s get her going. Then on the side they will say: except for that one righteous exemption I may need. We have to have Members who have the courage to go to tax reform that helps working families, that creates jobs, and that silences the people who want to take this exemption or that exemption away, so we do what is right for the generation that is about to look for jobs and the people who need a job today.

They want their businesses to grow. They want their economies to thrive. They want the United States to be the strong, great economy that it can be. It is going to take courage. It is going to take discipline. It is going to take time—but only so much time.

I believe this Congress, this Senate, over the course of a few months, if we focus on it and with the support of the President and the work of the Senate and the House, can get this done. We have to get it done. We promised the American people last year that if we had majorities, we would do what we had to do to deliver on this promise. It can be done. A lot of times, people ask me what keeps me up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. I keep them up at night.
all accounts, getting things across the island by road is impossible. Radar and navigation systems at the airports are down. The transportation mechanism of the island is literally ripped apart. So potable water, food, and fuel are impossible to get to those who need it. That state of affairs is unacceptable and unacceptable in America in 2017. Electricity and power are disrupted across the island. What will be done to restore power and electricity throughout the island? What will be done to make sure that diesel is available there and in the Virgin Islands? Many of the machines essential for lifesaving at the hospitals cannot be powered by generators alone. That state of affairs is inadequate and unacceptable in America in 2017.

All five of the hospitals in Arecibo, one of Puerto Rico’s largest cities, are without power. Many other hospitals are shuttered as well. Clinics are closed.

Mosquito-borne diseases are a real and present danger. Deadly ailments in contaminated food and water may cause serious and possibly deadly diseases. As these diseases spread, what is the plan to stop this kind of inadequacy? It is unacceptable in America in 2017.

As to communications, or the basic ability to talk to each other, to reassure each other, and to know what is going on with relatives and loved ones and friends—no wonder that anxiety and alarm are spreading beyond Puerto Rico to Connecticut, where those relatives and friends live now—this kind of lack of communication is unacceptable in America in 2017. What is the plan to correct it?

On public safety, looting and theft are becoming more prevalent. As the days drag on, law and order will deteriorate unless public safety is addressed more effectively.

There is another kind of challenge. A dam that is about to burst and could cause havoc in surrounding areas is a clear and present safety danger that illustrates again the weakness of Puerto Rico’s infrastructure.

Throughout the island have suffered severe flooding. So housing and basic shelter are inadequate. What is the plan to rebuild?

Payment for medicines cannot be made unless cash is available, and the lack of fuel means that ambulances and other medical machines are not working. If there is no cash for residents to buy basic goods, including food and water, how does the administration plan to solve this problem? This kind of inadequacy is unacceptable in America in 2017.

Rebuilding will require a long-term commitment. It will require a plan and a strategy, not just over the next 24 hours or 24 days but 24 months and longer. It must deal with a financial situation that is a storm of its own.

As I described it yesterday, this storm is not a natural disaster. It is a manmade disaster, the result of healthcare and tax programs that are beyond any fault of the people of Puerto Rico. It is not of their doing.

Vast swathes of resources have been swept away in Puerto Rico, including many of the attractions important for Puerto Rico’s tourist industry. The same is true, for example, on the island of St. John in the Virgin Islands. Tourism is a key component of Puerto Rico’s economy. It may take years and possibly decades to restore. What is the long-term plan? What is the strategy for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands? There needs to be a kind of Marshall Plan for rebuilding because the devastating damage done is no less than what Europe suffered as a result of World War II. We have an obligation—certainly, no less than rebuilding our European allies—to restore and rebuild Puerto Rico.

All of these natural disasters and the financial manmade storm come as Puerto Rico continues to endure the struggles of its internal financial crisis. The American territories are on the brink of economic collapse. Jobs and economic progress must be the end goal.

With so many questions about the President’s plan or lack of plan, I am struck by the need for this body and the Congress to take the initiative. I think we will need to begin action, begin hearings, and begin a process of building a plan if the administration fails to present it.

I believe, too, that we share so much with the island of Puerto Rico in people who have come to Connecticut and other parts of the country that we will find a ready and enthusiastic audience and support for such an effort.

In the past 2 days, after silence through much of it about Puerto Rico, the President seemed to blame the island itself, its financial struggle, other storms, and even the size of the ocean. There should be no excuses. There must be a call to action.

I thank our colleagues, our military, the first responders, the rescuers, and relief organizations—from Americares to the Red Cross to Save the Children—that have devoted so much and given so much in these times of crisis. They have been stretched thin. They have performed with courage and generosity and so have the donors who have come forward in Connecticut and around the country. People are calling my office asking what they can do for the people of Florida, New York, the gulf coast and Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. They are all fellow Americans, and we owe it to them to do more and do better to make sure that we keep faith with our fellow Americans.

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to talk about this subject.

NOMINATION OF AJIT PAI

Mr. President, I want to express as well my concern regarding the renomination of Ajit Pai to be Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. I will oppose his nomination. As much as I respect his background and his achievements, his intelligence and ability, I believe that, during his tenure over the past year, he has taken one step after another that is contrary to the public interest. He has launched an attack on net neutrality, and he is working adamantly for undoing the open internet order.

The open internet order was established based on 10 years of evidence about how the internet has changed, and it was most recently fully upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit in June 2016. The most recent evidence shows that net neutrality has not inhibited network investment at all, in contrast to Chairman Pai’s claim.

On broadband privacy, Chairman Pai forcefully advocated in support of efforts to rescind the FCC’s broadband privacy rules, a blatant attack on consumer privacy rights—all the more striking in light of recent dramatic concerns about privacy. Signing up for the internet should not mean that you have to sign away your right to privacy, and that is why it is so important to have baseline privacy and data security rules that our broadband providers subscribe to, observe, and follow.

Earlier this year, Senate Republicans gave a broadband privacy bill even light to sell sensitive personal information to the highest bidder—a move that came with cheers of support from Chairman Pai. By supporting this measure, I think Chairman Pai raised questions about his commitment to the average American consumer.

One of Chairman Pai’s first actions after his designation as chairman was to direct the FCC’s Wireline Competition Bureau to overturn an order designating nine wireless companies to provide lifeline broadband service through the USF Lifeline Program, despite the assertion that his foremost goal was to close the internet and digital divide. I strongly criticized this decision and led the Senate to unanimously assert that this action not only forfeits and affects these providers consumers’ interests, but it may also have a chilling effect on other broadband providers that were interested in participating in the Lifeline broadband program. This action would limit choice and increase the cost of service for the lifeline participants.

Finally, as Chairman of the FCC, Mr. Pai has a duty to review whether Sinclair’s proposal to acquire Tribunecast media ownership rules and serves the public interest by promoting localism and diversity. Rather than scrutinizing this deal as closely and carefully as I believe he should, Mr. Pai has focused his efforts on loosening restrictions to enable the deal. This transacti

On behalf of the American people, I believe that, during his tenure over the past year, he has taken one step after another that is contrary to the public interest. He has launched an attack on net neutrality, and he is working adamantly for undoing the open internet order.

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Finally, as Chairman of the FCC, Mr. Pai has a duty to review whether Sinclair’s proposal to acquire Tribune
also is no surprise that this decision happened just days before he had a meeting with the chairman of Sinclair.

Every market impacted by this megamerger would experience a reduction in responsive local news due to Sinclair’s unrestrained, top-down approach—denigrating diversity, dismantling our already distorted civic discourse, and devaluing local voices of women and people of color. Today, I sent a letter to Chairman Pai to let him know that following a media behemoth such as a Sinclair-Tribune would reflect an abject failure on his part to protect the public interest and to uphold the FCC’s duty to promote localism and diversity. Localism needs responsiveness to local interests, local news, and local voices. That is a trust the FCC has by its own rules and as a matter of public interest.

Today we rely more than ever on the internet for so many facets of our everyday life: freedom of expression, education, housing, entertainment, and more. Consumers need a champion that will be their voice at a time when so often the public interest is drowned by moneyed interests and special interests.

Chairman Pai, far from our champion, seems to be more a servant of those interests. American consumers deserve better. My hope is, the President will nominate someone who can better serve those interests. Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Massachusetts. 

DELRAHIM NOMINATION

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, our economy is in trouble. In markets all across our economy, a few giant corporations hold all the power. It is everywhere. Four airlines control over 80 percent of all domestic airline seats in America, while insurance giants own over 80 percent of the health insurance market. Four companies dominate over 80 percent of the beef market. Three drugstore chains control almost all retail pharmacies in the country. Two companies sell more than 70 percent of the beer in America. As competition has been snuffed out in industry after industry, big corporations have made out like bandits, and everyone else has paid the price. How do we know? American families shell out more for lower quality goods. Small businesses find it harder and harder to compete against the big guys. Innovators and entrepreneurs struggle to promote new ideas that can change the world. Income inequality has left more American families struggling to make ends meet as the top 1 percent has grown even richer and richer. As fewer companies have seized more economic power, they have translated their economic muscle into political power. It is a nasty, self-perpetuating cycle, and it is exactly why Congress created antitrust laws over a century ago. Back then, like today, a few powerful companies were stifling competition in markets all across the economy and gaining extraordinary political power. Congress decided to create laws to break up trusts and protect competition. Today the Justice Department’s Antitrust Division is charged with protecting competition by blocking anti-competitive mergers and breaking up companies that engage in illegal conduct. For decades, though, antitrust enforcers have put their tools on the shelf instead of aggressively enforcing our antitrust laws, they have given the green light to megamerger after megamerger and allowed big corporations to misuse this power without a peep. That problem is set to get worse in the Trump administration. Since taking office, the Trump administration has loaded his administration with a Who’s Who of former lobbyists, Wall Street insiders, and corporate executives committed to tilting the scales even further in favor of his powerful friends and against American families.

Now, President Trump has nominated someone to head the Justice Department’s Antitrust Division. His nominee, Makan Delrahim, will be in charge of determining whether there is something to stop these huge mergers or let the big guys just get bigger and more powerful. Unfortunately, Mr. Delrahim’s approach to antitrust enforcement is based on a hands-off economic theory that just leaves big corporations to do pretty much whatever they want to do. Case in point, just last year, when asked what he thought about the proposed merger of AT&T-Time Warner—a merger that would combine two of the most powerful companies in America—Mr. Delrahim said he didn’t think it was a “major antitrust problem.”

Mr. Delrahim spent over a decade working to convince government officials that other megamergers weren’t antitrust problems. During the airline merger wave that left us with only four major carriers, Mr. Delrahim was lobbying the government to approve a merger between US Airways and Delta. Despite the fact that there are only a handful of major airlines, Mr. Delrahim lobbied to get government approval for CV’S proposed takeover of Caremark. Even though only five health insurers control the vast majority of the health insurance market, he tried to convince government regulators to approve Anthem’s unsuccessful attempt to merge with Cigna.

Now he wants to take a spin through the revolving door and regulate the industries he worked to make even less competitive. For the giant corporations, wealthy individuals who want to amass more power and profits for themselves, Mr. Delrahim is a dream candidate, but he is also a dream candidate for President Trump. President Trump has not been shy about his willingness to use his power against individuals or companies he doesn’t like, and he has made it clear that he expects his agency heads to carry out his orders.

Mr. Delrahim has been a loyal supporter of President Trump’s since the campaign. He urged fellow Republicans to support President Trump because he correctly believed President Trump would appoint a pro-corporate Justice Department that would be “the best partner” as legal counsel to President Trump after he was sworn in and as the President reversed rules that made it easier for families to pay their mortgages or reversed rules to stop companies from dumping toxic waste into water. As head of the Antitrust Division, Mr. Delrahim will be in a position to make even more harmful decisions. It is no secret that Americans don’t trust Washington. Senators, Congressmen, and the public care more about catering to corporate donors than fighting for the interests of hard-working people who are trying to figure out how to pay the bills and build a little security in their own lives. It is a real problem, but it is a problem we can solve. We can begin to solve it by fighting the economic concentration that is putting more money and more power into the hands of a few giant corporations. That means choosing enforcers who will hold companies accountable when they break the rules, and that means rejecting nominees like Makan Delrahim.

TARBERT NOMINATION

Mr. President, I rise to speak on the nomination of Heath Tarbert, who has been nominated by President Trump to be the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Markets and Development. If confirmed, Mr. Tarbert will be in charge of the Treasury Department’s role on a multi-agency body called the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, or CFIUS, which reviews whether foreign acquisitions of a U.S. company would pose a threat to our national security and then makes recommendations to the President on whether the President should block the transaction. This is not about whether foreign investment benefits our economy. Of course it does. The United States is the third largest recipient of foreign direct investment, and our markets attract the world’s best talent and capital. Going back to the 1990s, only four foreign acquisitions of American companies have ever been blocked by a President based on a recommendation of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. This is about whether our national security is put at risk when foreign governments, foreign individuals, and corporations use their power to acquire our companies and assets. This is also about foreign governments and the companies they own,
trying to gain access to sensitive technologies that are important to our military and our national security.

The risk posed to the security of the United States is real. I want you to consider just one example here. According to a news report last year, an internal Pentagon report found that China was making significant targeted investments in cutting-edge American startups, with expertise in areas like autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, and robotics. These can be transactions that don’t necessarily result in foreign control over one of our companies, but they can give a foreign adversary access to technologies that could harm our interests and erode our military advantage.

The risk is significant, but unfortunately CFIUS does not apply to these transactions. The problem is, CFIUS was created back in 1976. Since then, both technology and the nature of foreign acquisitions, mergers, and takeovers have changed substantially. The nature of the threats we face has also changed substantially. Our top military officials, the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs—believe that CFIUS needs to be updated to fully address them, and I agree.

Another concern is that CFIUS does not, and cannot, ensure that the benefits of foreign acquisition outweigh the costs when it comes to the competitiveness of American workers. While I recognize that CFIUS has historically focused on the national security impacts of hostile foreign transactions, I think Congress should consider elevating the Department of Labor to the group of agencies that are currently part of the core CFIUS review process. If we believe economic security and national security are intertwined, then I think we can both look out for the American worker and review the national security threats posed by foreign acquisitions.

Finally, the ethics problems that are everywhere in this administration come forward again in the area of national security. We all know President Trump, his family members, and other Trump administration officials have business ties in the United States and throughout the world, even if we don’t know the full extent of President Trump’s business ties because he will not release his tax returns.

Imagine a Trump administration official who invests in or has a financial stake in an American company, a foreign state-owned company or both. Now imagine that a foreign company backed by China, Russia, or another foreign adversary tries to acquire a U.S. company. A Trump administration official suddenly has financial ties to that transaction and then that transaction triggers a CFIUS review for national security concerns. If that scenario were to occur, I am deeply concerned about the conflicts of interest that would emerge. I expect CFIUS to vigorously review such an investment as it affects our national security.

I raised all of these issues with Mr. Tarbert when I met with him today and his answers improved from when I asked him about these issues earlier this year, but I remain concerned about his commitment to modernize CFIUS and to ensure that CFIUS does more to prevent the impact of foreign acquisitions on American workers. I hope I am wrong, but I still have concerns about his nomination, which is why I will vote against it.

Mr. Tarbert promised me that if confirmed, he would ensure that no transaction is approved by CFIUS if national security concerns remain unresolved, and that is encouraging to hear. If he is ultimately confirmed, I will use my position in the Senate Banking Committee to hold him to that promise because the threats we face are growing in complexity, and the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States must be ready to confront them. We don’t want to wake up one day and discover that our adversaries have access to key components of our national security technology because Congress and the White House were asleep at the wheel.

If confirmed, I will work in good faith with Mr. Tarbert to ensure that the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States is updated so it is in the strongest position to protect our national security—both from the threats we face today and the threats we will face in the future.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. CRAPO. 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. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the nomination of Mr. Heath Tarbert to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Markets and Development. This position is both a critical national security and international economic policy job.

A critical part of the Assistant Secretary’s job—and the reason for which this position was created by statute and passed in the Banking Committee—is to marshal the procedures and processes of the interagency, Treasury-led Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, or CFIUS, which protects our Nation from hostile foreign transactions designed to undermine U.S. national security interests.

This is now a very time-sensitive post because Senators on both sides of the aisle are working to introduce legislation to change the CFIUS process for the first time in a decade.

Confirmation of Mr. Tarbert is critical so that he is available to provide necessary input on any proposed changes and to swiftly implement any new legislation.

Mr. Tarbert would also serve as the principal policy advisor to the Secretary on international economic matters, including serving as the Treasury’s representative at the Financial Stability Board.

Mr. Tarbert has strong bipartisan support and was voice-voted out of the Banking Committee.

Mr. Tarbert has served in senior roles in all three branches of government, including served as a lawyer and a recognized financial expert.

In short, he is an important asset whom the Congress and Treasury Department do not want to lose to further delay.

I urge all of my colleagues to support Mr. Tarbert’s nomination today and to vote for his confirmation.

With that, I yield the floor.
All of us, Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, are going to make sure that our markets remain free and competitive. Cheap talking points are not going to cut it; only serious debate will. I am pleased that recent efforts to save the partisan fray and treat this subject with the seriousness it deserves have paid off today.

I expect our colleagues to vote for Makan because of the high-quality lawyer he really is. I think my colleagues for joining me in this debate. I congratulate Makan, who is sure to make us all very pleased with the way he can run things and the way he can begin this important work that he knows is important. We know it is important; I particularly know it is important.

Makan has been an honest, decent, wonderful man. He is a good father. He has been a terrific staffer here on Capitol Hill. He has worked with both Democratic and Republicans in good faith. I think almost all of them, if they are honest, will say he was a very, very good person to work with and a wonderful person to fill this position.

It is a blessing that someone like Makan, who comes from a very humble family, could rise to the top in this particular position in antitrust, and I am sure he will do an honest, decent job within the antitrust laws as they are configured and written.

I am proud of him. I think the work of the world of him. I hope everybody will vote for him. But if not, I will commend him, and I know he will do a good job in this particular position.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VOTE ON TARBERT NOMINATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I yield back all time on both sides, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Ralph E. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be an Assistant United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 87, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 204 Ex.]

YEAS—87

NAYS—8

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON DELRAIM NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Makan Delrahim, of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General?

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 21, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 205 Ex.]

YEAS—73

NAYS—21

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Erickson nomination.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Ralph E. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, one of the Senate Republicans’ most important priorities for the rest of this year is passing comprehensive tax reform. Why? Because comprehensive tax reform is perhaps the single most important thing we can do to get our economy back on the path to long-term health. Comprehensive tax reform done right will boost jobs. It will increase wages. It will provide much needed tax relief for middle-income taxpayers and families. It will help businesses reinvest in their operations, employees, and new products. And most importantly, it will help us achieve strong, consistent economic growth.

Over the past few weeks, leaders from the House, Senate, and White House have been meeting to develop the framework for the tax reform bill we will take up later this year. This morning, they unveiled that framework. The framework sets Republicans’ five principles for tax reform: providing tax relief for the middle class; increasing wages, jobs, and economic growth;
keeping good-paying jobs here at home; increasing American competitiveness in the global economy; and simplifying the Tax Code.

The framework released today emphasizes tax relief for the middle class. First and foremost, we are going to make sure that working families receive a much needed increase in take-home pay. Right now, 50 percent of families are living paycheck to paycheck, while one-third of people across this country say they are just $400 away from a financial crisis. That is not acceptable.

Our tax reform plan will ensure that these families are no longer left behind. Our plan will increase the standard deduction, which will provide tax relief to those families who need it the most. It will also enhance the child tax credit, and I don’t need to tell anyone that the important work of raising a family is getting more and more expensive. It is time for hard-working families to keep more of the income they earn.

Collapsing the seven income tax brackets to three, we will ensure that working families get to keep more of what they earn.

Second, our tax plan will increase wages, jobs, and economic growth by lowering taxes and improving cost recovery for American businesses and job creators. The framework released today laid out a goal here at home: 20 percent corporate tax rate. Right now, our corporate tax rate is the highest in the developed world. Our competitors pay an average rate of 22.5 percent, while U.S. companies face a 35-percent tax rate. That is a big problem. Our uncompetitive tax rate has driven companies to move their headquarters and jobs overseas and led to wage stagnation and a lack of opportunity for American workers. Lowering the corporate rate will create jobs and increase wages for working families. The goal of our tax reform plan is to let American families complete their taxes on something as simple as a postcard.

An equally important priority laid out in the framework is lower tax rates for small businesses, farms, and ranches. Like bigger businesses, small businesses—from partnerships to S corporations—currently face high tax rates, at times even exceeding those paid by large corporations. Lowering tax rates for these businesses and creating a new maximum passthrough rate will allow a business to reinvest more of its earnings in successful small business.

In short, it will help these job creators thrive. The Republican tax plan will also allow for unprecedented expense. Allowing small businesses to recover their costs more quickly will free up capital and allow them to grow and create jobs.

The framework released today also shows how we are going to meet our goal of making America more competitive and keeping those good-paying jobs here at home. A key part of keeping good-paying jobs here at home is making the United States an attractive place to do business by reforming our outdated worldwide tax system. Having a worldwide tax system means that American companies pay U.S. taxes on the profit they make here at home as well as on some or all of the profit they make abroad, once they bring that money back to the United States. That is that U.S. companies are already paying taxes to foreign governments on the money they make abroad. Then, when they bring that money home, they too often end up having to pay taxes on the same profits again at the highest tax rate in the industrialized world. It is no surprise that this discourages businesses from bringing their profits back to the United States to invest in their domestic operations, new jobs, and increased wages.

Between 1983 and 2003, when the U.S. tax rate was much more competitive with those of other countries, there were 29 corporate inversions where U.S. companies moved abroad. Between 2003 and 2014, when other countries were dropping their corporate tax rates and shifting to territorial tax systems, there were 47 such inversions.

Our tax plan addresses this drag on our economy from our outdated worldwide tax system to a territorial tax system. By shifting to a territorial tax system here in the United States—a move, I might add, that is supported by Members of both parties—we will eliminate taxation that encourages companies to send their investments and their operations overseas. Combine that with a reduction in our high corporate tax rate, and we can provide a strong incentive for U.S. companies to invest their profits at home in American jobs and American workers instead of abroad.

We will also simplify our Tax Code. Each year, Americans spend 2.6 billion hours filling out complicated individual income tax returns. In other words, this tax drag on our economy, it is an annual frustration and burden for hard-working families. The goal of our tax reform plan is to let American families complete their taxes on something as simple as a postcard.

Lower rates, fewer tax brackets, and a generally simplified code will end the complicated mess that too many families face every tax season.

We will continue to develop the details of this framework in the coming weeks as we work toward a final draft of our comprehensive tax reform bill. I look forward to collaborating with my colleagues in the Senate Finance Committee as we work on the path toward long-term economic health and the jobs, increased wages, and opportunities that come along with it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, often late at night when the Senate passes a piece of legislation by unanimous consent, people often don’t get a chance to understand what it really means, and usually there is a sense of, well, this maybe won’t be the most important thing coming down the road, and even if it is, just said OK, and so it passed the Senate.

Last night, the Senate took action on Medicare. At a time when 10,000 people will turn 65 every day for years to come, Medicare is something millions of older people rely on, and their kids and grandkids make plans to make sure their grandparents are taken care of, but also they want to know what their future is going to be as they grow older.

What the Senate did last night—Democrats and Republicans coming together—is, in my view, transformational for seniors today and the building of an effort that is going to evolve in the days ahead for kids and their parents and their grandparents to, in effect, benefit from an updated Medicare guarantee that will stand the test of time for many years to come. The reason I say “updated Medicare guarantee” is that Medicare is not a voucher. It is not a piece of paper. It is not something you get and then, well, maybe it will do you some good, but if your healthcare costs go above your vouchers, you are going to get buried in costs. Medicare is a guarantee that vital services are going to be available to those over 65.

Last night, all Senators voted to send to the House of Representatives a bipartisan effort that was years in the making to update the Medicare guarantee to start focusing on chronic illnesses, such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer’s.

Mr. President, Mr. President, I am going to make this a little bit personal. I am so grateful to Chairman Hatch, Senator Isakson, Senator Warner—the bipartisan group in the Senate that has been working on this.

What I can tell the Senate tonight is that back when I was director of the Gray Panthers and ran the legal aid services for older people, Medicare was a very different program. Back in the 1960s, when we wrote the Gray Panthers off the ground, it was a very different program than it is in 2017. Medicare really consisted of two parts. There was Part A. If a senior broke their ankle or needed surgery for a broken hip, they went to the hospital, and Medicare Part A would be there to cover a senior’s surgery. If a senior had an awful bout of the flu, or he or she visited the doctor and they used Part B. That is not Medicare in 2017. Medicare Part A in 2017 is not primarily about treating the doctor and going to the hospital, and Medicare Part A would be there to cover a senior’s surgery. If a senior had an awful bout of the flu, he or she visited the doctor and they used Part B. That is not Medicare in 2017. Medicare Part A now is.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield? Mr. WYDEN. I am going to make this a little bit personal. I am so grateful to Chairman Hatch, Senator Isakson, Senator Warner—the bipartisan group in the Senate that has been working on this.

What I can tell the Senate tonight is that back when I was director of the Gray Panthers and ran the legal aid services for older people, Medicare was a very different program. Back in the 1960s, when we wrote the Gray Panthers off the ground, it was a very different program than it is in 2017. Medicare really consisted of two parts. There was Part A. If a senior broke their ankle or needed surgery for a broken hip, they went to the hospital, and Medicare Part A would be there to cover a senior’s surgery. If a senior had an awful bout of the flu, or he or she visited the doctor and they used Part B. That is not Medicare in 2017. Medicare Part A in 2017 is not primarily about treating the doctor and going to the hospital, and Medicare Part A would be there to cover a senior’s surgery. If a senior had an awful bout of the flu, he or she visited the doctor and they used Part B.
older people with two or more chronic conditions. I will tell you, until the Senate Finance Committee, on a bipartisan basis, began to deal with this problem—and fortunately, we had a couple of colleagues in the House who picked up on it—we were not even aware that, basically, both political parties had missed it. They really missed the fact that most of the Medicare dollars—90 percent—go to seniors who have two or more of these chronic conditions. They might, for example, deal with diabetes and heart problems.

But today’s seniors really face the kinds of conditions that didn’t dominate the program back in the days when the Gray Panthers were getting off the ground. Today, seniors get their care in a variety of different ways. It is not just fee-for-service medicine. We have the Medicare Advantage Plan, Accountable Care Organizations, and other new systems under development.

So keeping up with those changes—update, the Medicare guarantee ought to be a real priority for policymakers. That is why the Finance Committee has put so much effort over several years to get the bill that passed late last night across the finish line. There are steps before policies reach the President’s desk with strong bipartisan backing of the entire Senate. I am confident the job will get done.

The CHRONIC Care Act means more care at home and less in institutions. It will expand the use of lifesaving technology. It places a stronger focus on primary care. It gives older people—however they get their Medicare—more tools and options to receive care specifically targeted to address chronic illnesses and to keep them healthy. These, in my view, are a whole set of building blocks that you have to set in place to update the Medicare guarantee. Still to come is ensuring that every person with so-called chronic conditions has an advocate to help them navigate through the Byzantine healthcare system in America. I just want to highlight that point. If you have two or more of these chronic conditions—I guess the physicians call them comorbidities—you can be drowning, especially if you are not part of a coordinated Medicare program or Medicare Advantage or something like that. You can just be drowning in forms and paperwork.

But one other thing I want to tell you about—I want it understood, as I want to tell Chiefman HATCH. He and I put together the bipartisan chronic care working group two years ago, and Senators WARNER and ISAACSON did a first-rate job of leading it.

There is an awful lot of sweat equity put in by staff. A lot of staff worked on these issues while they were dealing with weddings. We had three children born in the process, and there were job changes.

Big thanks go to Karen Fisher, Hannah Hawkins, Kelsey Avery, Leigh Stuckhard, Liz Jurinka, Beth Vrabel, and Matt Kazan on our team. Chairman HATCH and his team really stepped up to work with us and all the Senators: Jay Khosla, Brett Baker, Jen Kuskowski, Katie Meyer-Simeon, and the chronic care lead, Erin Dempsey. Big thanks also go to Senators WARNER and ISAACSON for lending us Marvin Figueroa and Jordan Bartolomeo.

I close these remarks by saying that I think what happened last night—while certainly not something everybody is talking about this evening—is something that is going to be extraordinarily important in the years ahead that I know that the President of the Senate and I have talked about—this whole question of healthcare and Medicare and the like.

This was an important step to take and an important step we can build on. I hope that everybody in the House will take action quickly.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. President, let me turn now to this question of the Puerto Rico disaster. It has now been a week since Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, and 3.5 million American citizens are living amidst a horrifying state of devastation. When I was chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which has jurisdiction over affairs of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and America’s other territorial possessions, I got very involved in the economic issues on the island.

But I come today to make a humanitarian plea to my friends and colleagues in the Senate. It is a plea not about economics. It is about people—fathers and mothers, children, grandparents, teachers, nurses, and thousands of veterans who served their communities. It is a plea of country proud.

They are dealing with something that is almost unimaginable—this horrifying set of circumstances that they now find dominating their lives. The press accounts describe Puerto Rico as looking like a war zone. Millions of people on the island are without power, running water, and fuel. The few hospitals that are open—only 20 for the entire island—struggle to care for the injured and the sick. Many doctors and first responders are unable to get to the island. Their lives, too, are thrown into chaos, and 911 still doesn’t work. Cell service and power are down. The airport in San Juan barely functions now, after days of being completely off the grid.

It is almost impossible for us here in this city to imagine this. We have the basic infrastructure and health and safety that we take for granted every day. Nobody knows how many lives have been lost or how many homes and businesses have been damaged beyond repair, and how many lives have been forever altered. What is known is that this disaster has affected the lives of every single one of the 3.5 million individuals living on the island and the millions more on U.S. mainland, who have had sleepless nights worrying about loved ones. This is a humanitarian crisis on American soil. It is past time to step up and provide immediate aid to help these Americans—not only for Puerto Rico but also for the U.S. Virgin Islands, which have been pummeled by these storms. It is not just the right thing to do. It is the only thing to do.

A few hours ago, I joined 35 of my colleagues in sending a letter to the President, and we requested a number of specific actions. Currently, 24 municipalities in Puerto Rico have yet to receive individual disaster assistance. This means that people who have lost their homes in these areas are ineligible for Federal assistance. This is unacceptable.

Next, while the President rightfully revised his original disaster declaration so that the island will not have to split the cost of disaster relief with the Federal Government for 180 days, the President should continue this assistance until the island is back on its feet.

The administration also needs to include funding and necessary emergency support for the Puerto Rico Medicaid Program in any emergency request. Medicaid in Puerto Rico doesn’t work the way it does in the 50 states, where it is a guarantee of care for vulnerable, low-income people. Puerto Rico’s Medicaid Program is built on a block grant, which means that in times of crisis resources may be the least available. It is almost impossible for us here in this city to imagine this. We have the basic infrastructure and health and safety that we take for granted every day. Nobody knows how many lives have been lost or how many homes and businesses have been damaged beyond repair, and how many lives have been forever altered. What is known is that this disaster has affected the lives of every single one of the 3.5 million individuals living on the island and the millions more on U.S. mainland, who have had sleepless nights worrying about loved ones. This is a humanitarian crisis on American soil. It is past time to step up and provide immediate aid to help these Americans—not only for Puerto Rico but also for the U.S. Virgin Islands, which have been pummeled by these storms. It is not just the right thing to do. It is the only thing to do. It is the only thing to do. It is the only thing to do. It is the only thing to do.
Rico’s economy, and they ought to be extended with any disaster relief package in order to give workers and businesses certainty and predictability. This includes tax incentives for producing goods in Puerto Rico and rebates for taxes on exported rum. In my view, if the people and government plan and act out in a proactive way, it will give predictability for the future and make a difference—an important difference to a lot of people on the job.

It is crucial to get Puerto Rico’s electric grid up and running and provide power generators in the meantime. This isn’t simply a matter of recharging phones or turning televisions back on for news updates. Going without power is life-threatening. Perishable food goes bad. Those with diabetes can’t refrigerate their insulin. Hospitals have a difficult time running essential medical equipment, like dialysis machines or heart monitors. Air conditioners are useless, which is especially dangerous for kids and infants given the hot, humid temperatures and the limited supply of safe water.

Another necessary step is to help ensure that Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands receive assistance as quickly as possible. That would include a short-term waiver of the Jones Act. The Jones Act is an important policy for ensuring a vibrant U.S. maritime industry and for our national defense. But in times of disaster it is more important to begin to help those impacted areas as quickly as possible. The government has granted such a waiver in Houston and Florida, and it is, in my view, beyond comprehension that they haven’t done the same thing for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Finally, the administration needs to mount a full-court press to rebuild the islands’ roads, ports, and airports. Once aid arrives, it is useless if you can’t get it out to those who need it most.

As several of my colleagues and I wrote to the President today, our military is uniquely qualified to help Puerto Rico meet some of its critical recovery needs. That includes construction battalions that can repair power and surface transportation infrastructure. I close by saying that the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are desperate for our help. This situation is extreme. Congress and the administration need to act as soon as possible. The hurricane Maria and Irma is just the beginning. The fact is that these megastorms, fueled by global warming, are going to keep coming, even after the power is restored and the storm damage from Maria and Irma is repaired. There is going to be a lot of work needed to reverse the damage of struggle and build up Puerto Rico’s economy and infrastructure.

Coming to the aid of our fellow Americans at a time of crisis, in my view, is at the very core of being Americans. I call it “the Oregon way.” Our natural disaster this summer was wildfires. Recently, I was out visiting fire camps that stretched from our northern border with Washington State to our southern border with California and many points in between. I met people helping Oregon fight fire from all over the United States. I met Floridians who were there the weekend Irma hit Florida. They were there to help people and help them and their families were worried about what Irma was going to do to Florida.

Colleagues, I close simply by saying that we should expect no less in response to the hurricane disaster in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The American people now have to be part of a mobilization to bring together the enormous resources in the Federal Government to help when disaster strikes. It is a matter of basic fairness and humanity to help protect and restore these American citizens and lands.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, let me say that I wrote to the Secretary of the Interior on the Jones Act that help is on its way. It is a very difficult thing because we don’t have any idea how long this is going to last. When you stop to think about a land that is in the tropics not having electricity, it is something that is hard to imagine. And it gets arms around the devastation that takes place. I appreciate the fact that he has brought that up.

WORK OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, when I watch the news, I can’t help but see that the media is showing a kind of picture of Washington that really doesn’t exist. The news would have the public believe that there is a lot of dysfunction in the administration, and nothing is getting done. But I have spoken to people of how the government has been working to get America back in business.

In my former life, I participated for some 20 years or longer in a free enterprise business. I was making money. I was losing money. I was hiring people, doing what I thought Americans were supposed to be doing. All that time, the major problem I had was the obstruction of the Federal Government. One of the reasons I actually ran in the first place was to try to save the free enterprise system. I never dreamed that we would end up with an administration—as well-meaning as the Obama administration was—that would be putting people out of business.

During the last administration, the Obama administration, new rules were created that had no purpose but to hinder economic growth. In fact, President Obama is the first President since Hoover not to hit a 3-percent GDP growth in any year of his Presidency. Help with disaster recovery is one under scrutiny from every regulatory agency. President Obama added more regulations to the Federal Register than any other President in history. Businesses are complying with regulations, costing in the neighborhood of $2 trillion. You have to keep in mind that when you hear the businesses and corporations are paying this, it is not the businesses that are paying it. It is the public. And when they foreclose mortgages, if the people foreclose mortgages, and they, through increased costs of goods and services or through taxes, are paying it...

I heard an alarming figure the other day that, this year, 65 percent of the people in America—this is a poll that is about a week old—are opposed to any stopping of regulations in corporations. Yet they are the very ones who are paying for this fun they are having.

This administration has tried to do something about all the overregulation, all the rules that the previous administration had put in place. There are two ways you can do this. One is through Executive orders. People know what those are; that is, the President could issue an order that will undo damage that was done by a previous Executive order imposing a new rule on America. That hasn’t been taking place.

I yield the floor. Mr. President, I want to say something else, the other way of doing it. It is through a CRA resolution. Not many people know what a CRA resolution is. A CRA resolution is a Congressional Review Act resolution. It started about 20 years ago and has never been used until this administration. What it does is say that if you have up to 30 Members of the Senate, you can get a CRA resolution against a rule that some administration has put in place in a certain time period. It is the way people who are elected to office, accountable to the people, can get things done and be answerable to the people, as opposed to an unelected bureaucrat who is out there imposing hardships and rules on the public.

Actually, this administration came in, and they passed 14 Congressional Review Act resolutions; that is, 14 in the first few weeks, actually. The savings from repeal of these 14 regulations were estimated to be $3.7 billion in costs and 4.2 million hours of paperwork, the most expensive of which—this is kind of interesting because I introduced a CRA resolution. It happens to be that mine was the first one to pass. So I had the first signing ceremony with our new President Trump, right after the initial days of his administration.

The rule was imposed by the Obama administration. It was one that would force domestic oil and gas companies to release all of the information they had in formulating their estimates and their bids in competition with maybe China or other countries, and it was putting our domestic oil and gas companies at a competitive disadvantage. This was all part of the Obama war on fossil fuels. Everyone knows that fossil fuels are a source of energy, and we have an effort to do that. We introduced a resolution repealing that. It was a CRA resolution, and it was successful. We
had our signing ceremony, and that was history.

That is of 45—some Executive orders—and 1 of 14 successful CRA resolutions. In addition to the CRA resolutions, President Trump has signed 45 Executive orders with the goal of reducing regulatory red tape and cutting back on harmful administrative red tape.

Thanks to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle for changing the Senate rules because, with their help, President Trump and a Republican-led Senate have been able to confirm one of the most conservative Cabinets in history, and they have been working to implement the President’s pro-business, pro-jobs, pro-economic growth policy.

If you want to see the effect that this administration is having, you need only to look at the energy industry. Of course, that is to say nothing about the fact that we now have a great conservative judge. But when you look at the energy industry, it has been under attack for 8 years.

Within weeks after taking office, the Army Corps of Engineers under the Trump administration approved an easement for the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota. This delay or withholding had been waived purely for political far-left reasons.

Later the same month, the Department of the Interior lifted the coal leasing ban that the Obama administration had placed on Federal land. Federal lands have about 40 percent of the coal production in the United States, so that was just devastating to that industry. It was a killer.

Another notable win for energy came just 2 weeks after the President issued an executive order to begin the permitting process for the Keystone Pipeline. Again, the Obama administration had been withholding permits for purely political reasons.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in the Energy Regulatory Commission; that is, FERC. FERC was without a forum from February until mid-August, creating a backlog and delaying $50 million of energy infrastructure projects from moving forward. The new forum has quickly gone to work to address that backlog, improving pipelines and power agreements.

However, a decision made last week has clearly sent a message that America’s energy industry is open for business again. For years, New York State had been delaying consideration of water certifications that are required for FERC approval to allow construction of several federally approved pipelines. The Millennium Pipeline in particular, runs 9 miles from one pipeline to a natural gas-fired electric plant, providing clean, cheap, natural gas power in New York State. It was delayed and denied certification simply because, again, the radical left doesn’t want it.

Last week, FERC took the authority granted to them under the Clean Water Act to override New York State’s denial of certification because New York had waived their authority under the law.

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act says that if a State “refuses to act on a request for a certification within a reasonable period (which shall not exceed 1 year) after the receipt of such request, the certification requirements . . . shall be waived with respect to such Federal application.”

With environmentalists increasingly urging States like New York, New Jersey, and Virginia to block pipelines by delaying or withholding otherwise valid certifications, these States are interfering with interstate commerce, a role that is clearly within the purview of the Federal Government.

I applaud the administration for the progress they have made and the independent agencies for taking a stand against the gamesmanship of the radical left, environmental groups, and those who do their bidding by using loopholes and delays to block valid, compliant energy projects from safely transporting cheaper and cleaner energy across State lines.

When the government works with industry, not against it, we start to see companies unleash investments across the country. In fact, the economy has picked up since Trump and his administration have come into office with the economy growing 3 percent in just the second quarter, which is the first full quarter under the administration, and the fastest pace of growth in 2 years, according to the website called CNN Money.

Each nomination, confirmation, or policy directive of President Trump and the Republican-led Congress signals to the business community and American workers that America is open for business again.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to address our energy industry’s needs so that private investors can be utilized to deliver American products to American consumers around the world. Just this week, I introduced a bill to address the known bottleneck issues that add unnecessary delays in the FERC permitting process by identifying participating agencies early in the process and providing contract reviews and providing transparency. This is something that is just common sense.

I thank very much Senator King and his staff for working with me and my staff on this legislation, and I hope my colleagues will join us in getting these reforms into law.

I bring this up only because you would never know that this is progress that is being made in the economy through the Trump administration. Somehow that report has yet to get through.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOREN

Mr. President, I have another thing in mind. A lot of people who have been around in this Senate for a while remember the name of David Boren. David Boren is from my State of Oklahoma. He was a Senator here for quite some period of time. He went on to be the president of Oklahoma University.

I am kind of excited about recognizing him, especially because David Boren was a Democrat. In 1967, he was elected Governor of Oklahoma. He ended up going on to become a red State. He was a Democrat, and, I, who was a Republican, would win my nomination, and I would run for Governor as a Republican, and of course he most likely...
would lose—he was running against a very popular Democrat. Anyway, as it turned out, he won. Coming from a solid Democratic State, I can remember calling him up and saying: What do we do now? I think I was best advised to just go out of town until the campaign was over.

Anyway, we spent time together, and we had a great time. David did a great job as the University of Oklahoma’s president. He would actually teach classes. He always put students first. So he did a great job.

I would say that it is fitting that he announced his retirement this year because this is his 50th year of public service, and he leaves a legacy of dedication and hard work and public service. His influence has shaped Oklahoma more than I think he ever thought he could. His daddy was Lyle Boren, who was a very popular Democratic House Member for a long period of time, and we all at that time became very close friends.

I don’t think there has been a man who loved Oklahoma more and served our State more faithfully than David Boren.

God bless you, David Boren. Enjoy your retirement.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

AFFORDABLE COLLEGE TEXTBOOK ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, textbook costs are one of the most overlooked barriers to college affordability and access, and they are continuing to get more expensive.

Over the last decade, 2006 to 2016, the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index shows that consumer prices for college textbooks increased almost 90 percent. It means students have to spend more every year. In 2016 to 2017, the College Board recommended that students budget an average of $1,250 for their books a year. A survey released by the Student Public Interest Research Group reported that 65 percent of students decided not to buy a textbook because of the cost, and 94 percent of those students worried it would hurt their grade.

This week, I joined with Senators AL FRANKEN and ANGUS KING and Representatives JARED POLIS and KRISTEN SINEMA to reintroduce the Affordable College Textbook Act. This bill would establish a grant program to encourage the creation and use of high-quality open textbooks which are free to use. Greater access to and widespread use of these open textbooks can save each student hundreds of dollars, and, long term, it puts pressure on the traditional college textbook market to come up with affordable alternatives.

My home State of Illinois provides an example of how this bill would work. The University of Illinois used $150,000 in Federal money to pilot an open textbook project at its main campus. The university, working with faculty, developed an open textbook, “Sustainability: A Comprehensive Foundation.” This textbook was published electronically for free and open use. You can go online today and find it.

Instead of a student having to shell out $150 or more for her introductory environmental sustainability class, he or she can use this free online book. That is a direct savings to a student every time a professor assigns this text in place of a traditional textbook. Today it is saving students money in Illinois, but also across the country at other colleges and universities where it has been adopted by faculty into their curriculum.

I would again like to thank my colleagues, Senators AL FRANKEN and ANGUS KING, for joining me in this effort. I would also like to thank the wide variety of organizations that support this bill, including the U.S. PIRG, SPARC, National Association of Big Ten Students, National Association of College and University Public Relations Officers, Association of Community Colleges, United Negro College Fund, and others.

Mr. President, I hope that my colleagues in Congress will join us in supporting this bill to create a program at the Federal level to encourage the creation and adoption of these materials.

In the meantime, I hope students across the country will reach out to their professors and have this conversation with them. Ask them to adopt these free, quality materials that are available today.

FUNDING FOR SAFE, PUBLIC LATRINES IN AFRICA AND ASIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in the year 2017, when some people live in extravagant homes with half a dozen or a dozen bathrooms with marble floors and the latest fixtures, an estimated 2.5 billion people live in squatter with no access to modern sanitation. One billion people have no access to latrines and defecate in the open, like our ancestors did thousands of years ago.

The United States spends about $400 million a year on water supply and sanitation programs worldwide, pursuant to the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005. One of our late colleague’s many public policy contributions was his passionate concern and leadership on issues such as the growing scarcity of clean water sources—even in our own country—and the preventable suffering that comes from poor sanitation. His book, “Tapped Out,” is another contribution he made to greener understanding of these challenges.

The law named for him requires the Secretary of State, in consultation with the U.S. Agency for International Development and other U.S. Government agencies, to develop and implement a strategy to provide affordable and equitable access to safe water and sanitation in developing countries.

For the past several years, the Congress has directed that $14 million of those funds be used specifically to develop and implement a strategy to provide affordable and equitable access to safe water and sanitation in developing countries.

Unfortunately, USAID has not utilized these funds as effectively as we intended, and the fiscal year 2018 Department of State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill failed to appropriate the $14 million. An amendment was reported unanimously by the Senate Appropriations Committee on September 7, specifies that not less than $15 million shall be made available “to support initiatives by local communities in Africa and Asia to build and maintain safe, public latrines.”

What we intend is not rocket science. Today communities in Africa and Asia, often with the assistance of small local or U.S. nongovernmental organizations like the Advocacy Project, are building low-cost, easy to maintain, public latrines. Something as basic as a latrine can transform a community, particularly for women and girls. Not only does it reduce their vulnerability to assault, it reduces the obvious health problems caused by open defecation. It also increases girls’ access to education, if there are latrines for girls at schools. The cost of such projects can be as little as a few hundred dollars, particularly when members of the community volunteer their labor. Just as important as the design and construction is a plan for community members to regularly maintain the latrines and to educate the local population—men, women, and children—on their use. Access to water and sanitation is fundamental to social and economic development. The lack of safe drinking water and proper sanitation, coupled with poor hygiene, are leading causes of sickness and death worldwide. Nearly 1,000 children under age 5 die each day from diarrhea caused by contaminated water and from poor sanitation and hygiene. There are few ways to
safeguard a person’s health and improve their dignity more basic than by providing them access to sanitation facilities for safely disposing of human waste.

There should be no confusion about what these $15 million can achieve. We want USAID missions in the least developed countries, where women and girls in rural areas lack access to safe, public latrines to identify communities for pilot projects, where local leaders want to address this problem and where a small investment could make a significant difference. Working with those leaders and utilizing the technical expertise of local or U.S.-based NGOs, we can help set an example for other communities to replicate.

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

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 204, on the nomination of Heath P. Tarbert, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary of International Markets and Development, U.S. Treasury Department. Had I been present, I would have voted no.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize an outstanding small business located in my home State of Idaho. Dedication, hard work, and the entrepreneurial spirit are some of the guiding principles that define us as Americans. It is these traits that have enabled so many of our fellow citizens to achieve the American dream. As our workforce moves further into the 21st century, new opportunities are created every day by the American economy to ensure that they can achieve a better standard of life, without reliance on others. My State of Idaho knows this and is proud to serve as an incubator for many small businesses that seek to expand these values through their unique entrepreneurial spirit. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, it is my pleasure to recognize LiveRez as the Senate Small Business of the Month for September 2017. LiveRez is one of a good number of software companies in Idaho, which provides services to American businesses nationwide and serves as a true example of hard work in pursuit of the American dream.

LiveRez is based out of Eagle, ID, and was founded by Tracy Lotz in 2008, after years of research and development within the vacation rental sector. Tracy started his journey with vacation rentals in 1994, when he launched First Choice Vacation Properties, one of the few early websites where managers were able to advertise their vacation rentals in cyberspace. It wouldn’t be until 2002 that Tracy and his nephew Jeremy would start building websites for their clientele of professional vacation rental managers, and within a year, they were pioneering online bookings in real time. It would not be until 2003 that the Lotz’s would shift focus from providing the service at an incremental level to designing software that would allow them to do this. In January 2008, LiveRez was launched as the first all-in-the-cloud management system. From there, they have continued expanding and innovating with the establishment of the First Advisory Board, and other technical applications that enabled their software to be one of the most sought after management systems for managers not only in the United States but also around the world.

Perhaps what makes all of this success even more incredible is that Tracy was able to do all of this organically, utilizing the revenue from the company’s early days to continue to grow. He did not seek out venture capital for the company, nor did he take on debt. Today Tracy and the team at LiveRez host their annual partner conference, which includes classes, tech reveals, networking, and more amenities for members of the industry.

I would like to congratulate Tracy Lotz and the employees of LiveRez on their innovation and hard work and the commitment that they have to their partners and clients. I wish the best for LiveRez, and I am confident that they will continue to provide innovative services and ideas to their growing customer base.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:05 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 603 of the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114–323), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following individual on the part of the House to the United Nations, Regional Organization for the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission: Mr. Matt Salmon of Mesa, Arizona.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 3:36 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Steny H. Hoyer, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 810. An act to facilitate construction of a bridge on certain property in Christian County, Missouri, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MEASURES PlACED ON THE CALENDAR

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

H.R. 3354. An act making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC–2910. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes” (Docket No. FAA–2017–0512) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 25, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2926. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of Managing Director, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; ATR–GIE Avions de Transport Regional Airplanes” (Docket No. FAA–2017–0481) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 25, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2927. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of Managing Director, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes” (Docket No. FAA–2017–0481) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 25, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2928. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of Managing Director, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Aviation Airplanes” (Docket No. FAA–2017–0496) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 25, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2929. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of Managing Director, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company Turbofan Engines” (Docket No. FAA–2017–0164) received during adjournment of the Senate on September 25, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2931. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of Managing Director, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Embracer S.A. Airplanes” (Docket No. FAA–2017–0088) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 25, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.
received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 25, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2931. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation: Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, Little River to Savannah River, Beaufort, SC” (RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2016-09343) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2932. A communication from the Program Analyst, Office of Managing Director, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “List of SOLAS Certificates and Certificates Issued by Recognized Classification Societies” (RIN1625-AC35) (Docket No. USCG-2016-0880) received during adjournment in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2933. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation: Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, Maumee River, Toledo, OH” (RIN1625-AA08) (Docket No. USCG-2016-09332) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2934. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation: Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, Wando River, Charleston, SC” (RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2015-09431) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2935. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation: Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, Intra-Coastal Waterway, Savannah River, Beaufort, SC” (RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2016-09343) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2936. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation: Delaware River, Philadelphia, PA” (RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2017-05431) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2937. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Intracoastal Waterway, Sarasota, FL” (RIN1625-AA03) (Docket No. USCG-2017-05432) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2938. 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-2017-05431) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2939. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, Little River to Savannah River, Beaufort, SC” (RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2016-09311) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2940. 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-2017-05432) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2941. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation: Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, Savannah River, Beaufort, SC” (RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2016-09332) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2942. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Great Lakes Pilotage Rates - 2017 Annual Review” (RIN1625-AC34) (Docket No. USCG-2016-20387) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2943. 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-2017-05431) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2944. 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-2017-05431) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2945. 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; Frogtown Regatta, Maumee River, Toledo, OH” (RIN1625-AA06) (Docket No. USCG-2017-07341) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2946. A communication from the Chief Counsel, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Repeal of Regulations Governing the Public Telecommunications Facility Program” (RIN0657-AC34) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 20, 2017, to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2947. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Transportation Statistics Annual Report 2016”; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2948. A communication from the Acting General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Annual Report on Disability-Related Air Travel Complaints Received During Calendar Year 2016”; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. WYDEN, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 1869. A bill to reauthorize and rename the position of Whistleblower Ombudsman to be the Whistleblower Protection Coordinator, to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. HETTCHAMP, Ms. CORTEZ-Masto, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. TITUS, and Mr. BARRASSO): S. 1870. A bill to amend the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 to secure urgent resources vital to Indian victims of crime, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 1871. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the role of podiatrists in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. BLUNT, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 1873. A bill to authorize the programs of the Transportation Security Administration relating to transportation security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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

S. 1874. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program to establish peer specialists in patient aligned care teams at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.
By Mr. WYDEN:
S. 1292. A bill to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to monitor and combat anti-Semitism globally, and for other purposes.

S. 1391. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of President John F. Kennedy.

S. 1568. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to report on the implementation of recent Government Accountability Office recommendations.

S. 1595. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage business creation by allowing faster recovery of start-up and organizational expenses, to simplify accounting methods for small businesses, to expand expensing and provide accelerated cost recovery to encourage investment in new plants and equipment, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Rubio, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. Tester) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1292, a bill to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to monitor and combat anti-Semitism globally, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mrs. Shaheen, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. Leahy) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. Cortez Masto) were added as cosponsors of S. 1568, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of President John F. Kennedy.

At the request of Mr. Graham, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. Casey) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. Boozman) were added as cosponsors of S. 1697, a bill to establish a continuing medical education program for non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical professionals who treat veterans to increase knowledge and recognition of medical conditions common to veterans, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Cassidy, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. Barrasso) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1358, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the treatment of certain direct primary care service arrangements and periodic provider fees.

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

By Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. Menendez)
S. 951. A bill to reform the process by which Federal agencies analyze and formulate new regulations and guidance documents, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Portman, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. Lankford) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. Sasse) were added as cosponsors of S. 951, a bill to reform the process by which Federal agencies analyze and formulate new regulations and guidance documents, and for other purposes.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Leahy, Ms. Baldwin, Mrs. Gillibrand, Ms. Hirono, Mr. King, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Markey, Mr. Van Hollen, Mr. Franken, Mr. Wyden, Ms. Warren, and Mr. Whitehouse)
S. 190. A bill to reform our government, reduce its size, and restore our democracy to the American people by increasing transparency and oversight of our elections and government, reforming public funding of presidential and congressional elections, and requiring States to conduct Congressional redistricting through independent commissions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Leahy, Ms. Baldwin, Mrs. Gillibrand, Ms. Hirono, Mr. King, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Markey, Mr. Van Hollen, Mr. Franken, Mr. Wyden, Ms. Warren, and Mr. Whitehouse)
S. 1875. A bill to move the United States toward greater energy independence and security, to increase the flexibility, efficiency, and reliability of the electric grid, to increase the competitiveness of the United States economy, to protect consumers, and to improve the energy performance of the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN:
S. 1876. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to advance energy storage deployment by reducing the cost of energy storage through research, development, and demonstration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN:
S. 1874. A bill to move the United States toward greater energy independence and security, to increase the flexibility, efficiency, and reliability of the electric grid, to increase the competitiveness of the United States economy, to protect consumers, and to improve the energy performance of the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. Whitehouse, and Mr. Reed):
S. 1576. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to advance energy storage deployment by reducing the cost of energy storage through research, development, and demonstration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN:
S. 1577. A bill to jump-start economic recovery through the formation and growth of new businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. Moran (for himself, Mr. Warner, Mr. Blumenthal, and Ms. Klobuchar)
S. 1877. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to advance energy storage deployment by reducing the cost of energy storage through research, demonstration, and development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. Moran (for himself and Ms. Klobuchar)
S. 1877. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to advance energy storage deployment by reducing the cost of energy storage through research, development, and demonstration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. Bennett):
S. 1878. A bill to authorize the Department of Labor’s voluntary protection program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pension.

By Mr. Barrasso (for himself and Ms. Stabenow):
S. 1879. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. Udall (for himself, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Leahy, Ms. Baldwin, Mrs. Gillibrand, Ms. Hirono, Mr. King, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Markey, Mr. Van Hollen, Mr. Franken, Mr. Wyden, Ms. Warren, and Mr. Whitehouse)
S. 1880. A bill to reform our government, reduce its size, and restore our democracy to the American people by increasing transparency and oversight of our elections and government, reforming public funding of presidential and congressional elections, and requiring States to conduct Congressional redistricting through independent commissions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. Schumer (for Mr. Menendez)
S. 194. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a public health insurance option, and for other purposes.

At the request of the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. Murphy) was added as a cosponsor of S. 364, a bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to exempt certain recipients of Department of Agriculture conservation assistance from certain reporting requirements, and for other purposes.

S. 538. A bill to clarify research and development for wood products, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. Stabenow, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. Isakson) was added as a cosponsor of S. 538, a bill to clarify research and development for wood products, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. Baldwin, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. Risch), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. Stabenow), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. Wicker), and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. Blumenthal) were added as cosponsors of S. 693, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools, social work schools, and other programs, including physician assistant education programs, to promote education and research in palliative care and hospice, and to support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative medicine.

At the request of Mr. Portman, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. Lankford) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. Sasse) were added as cosponsors of S. 951, a bill to reform the process by which Federal agencies analyze and formulate new regulations and guidance documents, and for other purposes.

S. 1144. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage business creation by allowing faster recovery of start-up and organizational expenses, to simplify accounting methods for small businesses, to expand expensing and provide accelerated cost recovery to encourage investment in new plants and equipment, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Thune, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. Hoeven) was added as a co-sponsor of S. 1144, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage business creation by allowing faster recovery of start-up and organizational expenses, to simplify accounting methods for small businesses, to expand expensing and provide accelerated cost recovery to encourage investment in new plants and equipment, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Rubio, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. Coons) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1292, a bill to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to monitor and combat anti-Semitism globally, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Brown, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. Durbin) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1319, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a continuing medical education program for non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical professionals who treat veterans to increase knowledge and recognition of medical conditions common to veterans, and for other purposes.
condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens and United States Citizens.

S. 1718
At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1718, a bill to authorize the minting of a coin in honor of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 1723
At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1723, a bill to amend the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 to provide a temporary license for loan originators transitioning between employers, and for other purposes.

S. 1754
At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1754, a bill to reauthorize section 310H of the Public Health Service Act to continue to encourage the expansion, maintenance, and establishment of approved graduate medical residency programs at qualified teaching health centers, and for other purposes.

S. 1767
At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UdALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1767, a bill to authorize an active role in ending this humanitarian tragedy.

S. 1718
At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from New York (Mr. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 264, a resolution designating September 2017 as “National Kinship Care Month”.

S. 1723
At the request of Mr. CANTWELL, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 267, a resolution designating September 2017 as “National Workforce Development Month”.

By Mr. WYDEN:
S. 1874. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish certain demonstration grant programs relating to the demonstration of advanced distribution systems, smart water heaters, vehicle-to-grid integration, and granular retail electricity pricing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN:
S. 1875. A bill to move the United States toward greater energy independence and security, to increase the flexibility, efficiency, and reliability of the electric grid, to increase the competitiveness of the United States economy, to protect consumers, and to improve the energy performance of the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN:
S. 1876. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to advance energy storage deployment by producing the cost of energy storage through research, development, and demonstration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.
SENATE RESOLUTION 269—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2017 AS "NATIONAL PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH"

Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. COONS)) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

Whereas over 16,000,000 families in the United States live with prostate cancer;

Whereas 1 in 7 men in the United States will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetimes;

Whereas prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed nonskin cancer and the third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths among men in the United States;

Whereas the American Cancer Society estimates that in 2017, 161,360 men will be diagnosed with, and more than 26,730 men will die of, prostate cancer;

Whereas 35 percent of newly diagnosed prostate cancer cases occur in men under the age of 65;

Whereas the odds of developing prostate cancer rise rapidly after age 50;

Whereas African-American men suffer from a prostate cancer incidence rate that is significantly higher than that of White men and have double the prostate cancer mortality rate than that of White men;

Whereas having a father or brother with prostate cancer more than doubles the risk of a man developing prostate cancer, with a higher risk for men who have a brother with the disease and the highest risk for men with several affected relatives;

Whereas screening by a digital rectal examination and a prostate-specific antigen blood test can detect the disease at the earlier, more treatable stages, which could increase the chances of survival for more than 5 years to nearly 100 percent;

Whereas only 29 percent of men survive more than 5 years after being diagnosed with prostate cancer after the cancer has metastasized;

Whereas there are no noticeable symptoms of prostate cancer in the early stages, making early detection crucial;

Whereas, in fiscal year 2017, the Director of the National Institutes of Health supported approximately $274,000,000 in research for prostate cancer; and

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1106. Mr. INHOFE (for Mr. GRASSLEY) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2266, to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges; and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1106. Mr. INHOFE (for Mr. GRASSLEY) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2266, to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges; and for other purposes.

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2017 as "National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month";

(2) declares that steps should be taken—

(A) to promote awareness of prostate cancer; and

(B) to encourage research—

(i) to improve screening and treatment for prostate cancer;

(ii) to discover the causes of prostate cancer; and

(iii) to develop a cure for prostate cancer; and

(C) to continue to consider ways to improve access to, and the quality of, health care services for detecting and treating prostate cancer; and

(3) calls on the people of the United States, interest groups, and affected persons—

(A) to promote awareness of prostate cancer;

(B) to take an active role in the fight to end the devastating effects of prostate cancer on individuals, families, and the economy; and

(C) to observe National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

September 27, 2017

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

S6189

BANKRUPTCY JUDGES IN CERTAIN JUDICIAL DISTRICTS.

(a) Temporary Office of Bankruptcy Judges Authorized by the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005.

1. Extensions.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized for the following districts by subsection (b) of the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2005 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) are extended until the applicable vacancy specified in paragraph (2) in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the respective district occurs:

(A) District of Delaware.—The 5th vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware;

(B) District of Puerto Rico.—The 1st, 2d, and 3d vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Puerto Rico;

(C) District of Maryland.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Maryland;

(D) Southern District of Florida.—The 1st and 2d vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the southern district of Florida;

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(ii) The 2d and 3d vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Maryland resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.


1. Extensions.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judges authorized for the district of Puerto Rico and the district of Maryland under section 2 of the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2012 (28 U.S.C. 152 note) remain applicable to the temporary office of bankruptcy judges referred to in paragraph (2).

2. Vacancies.—

(A) District of Delaware.—The 5th vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware—

(i) occurring more than 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(ii) occurring from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(B) District of Puerto Rico.—The 1st and 4th vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Puerto Rico—

(i) occurring more than 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(ii) occurring from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.

(C) District of Maryland.—

(i) The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Maryland—

(i) occurring more than 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(ii) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge, shall not be filled.
(3) One additional bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Michigan.

(b) Vacancies.—

(1) District of Delaware.—The 6th and 7th vacancies in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the district of Delaware—

(A) occurring 5 years or more after the appointment date of the bankruptcy judge appointed under paragraph (1) to such office, and

(B) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge shall not be filled.

(2) Middle District of Florida.—The 1st vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the middle district of Florida—

(A) occurring 5 years or more after the appointment date of the bankruptcy judge appointed under paragraph (1) to such office, and

(B) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge shall not be filled.

(3) Eastern District of Michigan.—The 2d vacancy in the office of a bankruptcy judge for the eastern district of Michigan—

(A) occurring 5 years or more after the appointment date of the bankruptcy judge appointed under paragraph (1) to such office, and

(B) resulting from the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a bankruptcy judge shall not be filled.

(c) SEC. 4. Bankruptcy Fees.

(1) Amendments to Title 28 of the United States Code.—Section 1930(a)(6) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking ''(6) In'' and inserting ''(6A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), in'' and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) Fees payable under section 1930(a)(6) of title 28, United States Code, for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022 shall not exceed $500,000."

(2) Deposits of certain fees for fiscal years 2018 through 2022.—Notwithstanding section 589(a) of title 28, United States Code, for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022—

(1) 98 percent of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of such title shall be deposited as offsetting collections to the appropriation for the United States Trustee System Fund; and

(2) 2 percent of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of such title shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury.

(c) Application of Amendments.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to fees payable under section 1930(a)(6) of title 28, United States Code, as amended by this section, for disbursements made in any calendar quarter that begins on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. Clarification of Rule Allowing Discharge to Governmental Claims Arising from the Disposition of Farm Assets Under Chapter 12 Bankruptcies.

(a) In General.—Subchapter II of chapter 12 of title 11, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(8) Claim by a governmental unit based on the disposition of property used in a farming operation.

''(a) Any unsecured claim of a governmental unit against the debtor or the estate that arises before the filing of the petition, or that arises after the filing of the petition and before the debtor’s discharge under section 1228, as a result of the sale, transfer, exchange, or other disposition of any property used in the farming operation—

''(1) shall be treated as an unsecured claim arising before the date on which the petition is filed;

''(2) shall not be entitled to priority under section 507;

''(3) shall be provided for under a plan; and

''(4) shall be discharged in accordance with section 1325.

''(b) For purposes of applying sections 1225(a)(4), 1228(b)(2), and 1229(b)(1) to a claim described in subparagraph (a), the amount that would be paid on such claim if the estate of the debtor were liquidated in a case under chapter 7 of this title shall be the amount that would be paid by the estate in a chapter 7 case if the claim were an unsecured claim arising before the date on which the petition was filed and were not entitled to priority under section 507.

''(c) For purposes of applying sections 523(a), 1228(a)(2), and 1229(c)(2) to a claim described in subsection (a) of this section, the claim shall be a claim of a kind specified in subparagraph (A) or (B) of section 523(a)(1).

''(d) A governmental unit may file a proof of claim for a claim described in section 507 of the United States Trustee System Fund as of September 30, 2016.

ARRANGED FROM THE DISPOSITION OF FARM ASSETS UNDER CHAPTER 12 BANKRUPTCIES.

authority for committees to meet

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I have 10 requests for committees to meet today, and the Senate will meet in room 224 of the Russell Senate Office Building, at 10:30 a.m. in room 224 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing. The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 27, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. in room 224 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.
Whereas according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 20,000,000 people are at risk of starvation this year in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen; and
Whereas, on March 22, 2017, Mr. Yves Daccord, the Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, testified before Congress that the crisis represents ‘one of the most critical humanitarian issues to face mankind since the end of the Second World War’ and warned that ‘we are at the brink of a humanitarian mega-crisis unprecedented in recent history’;
Whereas according to USAID, ‘An estimated 6.2 million people—more than half of Somalia’s total population—currently require urgent humanitarian assistance’;
Whereas according to USAID, ‘An estimated 5.5 million people—nearly half of South Sudan’s population—will face life threatening hunger by July’;
Whereas according to OCHA, ‘[m]ore than seventeen million people—an astounding 60% of the country’s population—are food insecure, including seven million people who are unable to survive without food assistance’;
Whereas according to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), ‘[s]ome 22 million children have been left hungry, sick, displaced and out of school in the four countries’ and ‘Nearly 1.4 million are at imminent risk of death this year from severe malnutrition’;
Whereas the humanitarian crises in each of these regions are, to varying degrees, man-made and preventable—exacerbated by armed conflict and deliberate restrictions on humanitarian access;
Whereas parties to the conflicts, including even some government forces, have harassed, attacked, and killed humanitarian workers, blocked and hindered humanitarian access, and continue to deprive the world’s most hungry people of the food they need;
Whereas humanitarian coordination, as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), have appealed for $5,600,000,000 in 2017 to address famines in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria; and
Whereas Mr. Daccord testified before Congress on March 22, 2017, ‘Our main message is clear: immediate, decisive action is needed to prevent vast numbers of people starving to death.’ Now, therefore, be it

SECTION 1. SENSE OF THE SENATE.
It is the sense of the Senate that—
(1) an urgent and comprehensive international diplomatic effort is necessary to address obstacles in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen that are preventing humanitarian aid from reaching millions of people who desperately need it;
(2) the United States should encourage other governments to join in providing the resources necessary to address the humanitarian crises in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen;
(3) parties to the conflicts in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen should allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need and respect and protect humanitarian and medical relief personnel and objects; and
(4) the United States, working with international partners, should support efforts to hold accountable those responsible for deliberate restrictions on humanitarian access in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen; and
(5) the contributions of charities, non-profit organizations, religious organizations, and businesses of the United States have an important role in addressing humanitarian crises.

SEC. 2. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.
Nothing in this resolution shall be construed as a declaration of war or authorization to use force.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3819, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.
The bill clerk read as follows:
A bill (H.R. 3819) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.
There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.
Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
The bill (H.R. 3819) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2017

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2266 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
The clerk will report the bill by title.
The bill clerk read as follows:
A bill (H.R. 2266) to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges, and for other purposes.
There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.
Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Grassley substitute amendment be considered and agreed to that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
The amendment (No. 1106) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.
(The amendment is printed in today’s RECORD under “Text of Amendments.”)
The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.
The bill was read the third time.
The bill (H.R. 2266), as amended, was passed.
NATIONAL PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 269, submitted earlier today.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 269) designating September 2017 as “National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.”

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 269) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 349; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for reappointment as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 152 and 601:

To be general

Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2017

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, September 28, further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Erickson nomination, with the time until the cloture vote equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:23 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 28, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate September 27, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

HEATH P. TARBERT, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MAKAN DELRAHIM, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR REAPPOINTMENT AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF AND APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 152 AND 601:

To be general

GEN. JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR.
Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 2061, the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act of 2017. This is an important piece of legislation and I am pleased to support it.

H.R. 2061 reinstates the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, which was originally designed to address the “deplorable human rights conditions” for North Koreans, as well as support various human rights groups and provide solutions toward permanent resettlement for North Korean refugees. Since 2004, the United States has resettled 244 North Korean refugees, making it the largest refugee resettlement program in the world. However, Congress has found that human rights conditions still have not improved as refugees remain at risk of losing their lives. As Americans, we have an enduring bipartisan interest to promote freedom for human rights, the transparency of human rights, and the importance of refugee protection. As members of Congress, we should work with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to expedite the resettlement of refugees, to increase our diplomatic efforts to cooperate with neighboring countries, and to urge China to work with us to help tackle the status of North Korean refugees within their territory.

I have seen, firsthand, the positive impact that refugees have had on my community. Clarkson, a city within my district, has received over 40,000 refugees over the past 25 years and almost 1,500 within the past year. These refugees have contributed to our economy and democracy.

Clarkston embodies the American spirit, providing a chance to these individuals who left everything behind in the hopes of finding a better life here in America. I am proud of the hope and opportunity of what Clarkston stands for, and that is why I am pleased to support H.R. 2061.

Providing for consideration of H.R. 2824, Increasing Opportunity and Success for Children and Parents through Evidence-Based Home Visiting Act; Providing for consideration of H.R. 2792, Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act of 2017; and for other purposes

SPEECH OF
HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, September 26, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Rules governing this underlying bill, H.R. 2792, introduced by Rep. KRISTI NOEM (R-SD) and Rep. SAM JOHNSON (R-TX).

I oppose the bill for the following reasons: SSI is a needs-based program for people with limited income and resources. It will terminate essential benefits of poor people. It will deprive poor people of due process. It will increase mass incarceration.

My amendment would have remedied these criminal justice defects in H.R. 2792, which struck the arrest warrant language because (1) it recklessly targets vulnerable and innocent individuals; (2) this bill deprives citizens of due process, particularly where many poor individuals are completely unaware of any pending warrant, and (4) there have been cases in which warrants were either decades old or, in many instances, it was a matter of a mistaken identity.

The underlying bill amends the Social Security Act (SSA) to make certain revisions that limit payment of benefits to fugitive felons under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the (SSA), by prohibiting Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments to individuals with an outstanding felony warrant or parole or probation violation. Almost none of the individuals who would be affected by this provision are actual fugitives from justice and most of the warrants in question are many years old and involve minor infractions, the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities said in a letter to Senators who tried to implement this policy.

This will merely be a continuation of President Trump’s $1.7 trillion budget cuts of programs designed to help the millions of poor and low-income families that need these programs for survival. Plainly stated, this bill will terminate SSI benefits of very low-income seniors and people with disabilities, because SSI is granted based on financial need.

In creating this bill, the sponsors essentially agree that it is best to incarcerate economically vulnerable people in order to fund the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV).

As the Center for Law and Social Policy, a nonprofit group focused on low-income Americans, previously reported of the Trump’s budget scheme, this bill would likewise, create an overall assault on a wide range of ordinary Americans for the purpose of providing tax cuts to the wealthiest.

My Democratic colleagues on Ways and Means offered amendments to fully pay for a 5-year reauthorization of the MIECHV program and doubling the funding by closing a tax loophole called the “stretch IRA.” Republicans however, would not let my colleagues vote on those amendments. My amendment and those of my colleagues would have made this bad bill a lot more palatable.

Instead, the Republicans have chosen, once again, to lock people up, and do so in a manner that deprives poor people of their sole source of income, while purportedly to safeguard against fugitive felons that are recipients of these SSI benefits. This bill is unnecessary because under current law, SSI and Social Security payments are already prohibited to people fleeing prosecution or confinement.

Most alarming, this bill will terminate these benefits without any judicial determination of guilt, and thus, usurping recipients’ rights to due process.

The presumption of “innocent until proven guilty” is the constitutional principle at the bedrock of our criminal justice system. This principle guarantees that the government cannot deprive citizens of their rights without due process of the law.

The bill maintains that payments could be immediately restored once the individual resolves any outstanding issues, a potentially lengthy and time-consuming process.

Ask the thousands of individuals swept under this broad policy if that is true. SSA already tried to implement this very ill-advised policy and it resulted in thousands of court challenges in 2009 forcing the agency to repay billions of dollars it had withheld from people deemed fugitives.

For example, Miami resident Joseph Sutrynowics’ Social Security Disability Insurance benefits were halted in 2008 because of a bad check he’d written to cover groceries in Texas more than a decade earlier.

Under this policy, SSA agreed to repay $700 million in benefits that were withheld from 80,000 people whose benefits have been suspended or denied since January 1, 2007 in the Martinez v. Astrue case. SSA could also, reportedly, repay close to $1 billion in benefits to 140,000 individuals in the Clark v. Astrue case.

We have already tried this before and failed miserably. Let us not waste tax payers’ money in litigation, while causing poor folks to go hungry. As the old adage says: “don’t continue to do the same thing and expect a different result, that’s insanity”.

Past experiences proved that this policy was detrimental then, and it is so now. It will further exacerbate the epic tragedy of mass incarceration, and the attendant costs incurred by taxpayers, particularly in the well-documented higher cost of incarcerating the elderly and those in poor health.
Even conservative coalitions like Freedom Works, American Conservative Union Foundation, Generation Opportunity, and Taxpayers Protection Alliance agreed that mass incarceration is extremely costly to taxpayers.

In addition to tax dollars in litigation fees, incarceration for taxpayers $407.58 per person per day and $148,767 per person per year.

Criminalizing poor individuals, depriving them of their social security income benefits, and increasing the incarceration rate in this fashion will not solve the fugitive problem this bill purports it will do.

In fact, this bill achieved expand existing problems of mass incarceration by increasing the likelihood for recidivism. Statistics show that incarceration does not serve as deterrence, nor does it keep our communities safe.

For the reasons stated above, I oppose this Rule and the underlying bill.

IN HONOR OF THE 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONTEREY COUNTY FARM BUREAU

HON. JIMMY PANETTA OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating the Monterey County Farm Bureau on the occasion of their 100th Anniversary. Throughout the last century, the Bureau has assisted ranchers and farmers with crop cultivation and production. Over time, the organization has grown to become one of the region’s most important economic institutions. In 1951, the Bureau formed various committees such as the Dairy, Field Crops, Grain Improvement, Tomato Growers, Tax and Legislation, Farm Service, and Water Problems Committees to ensure that farmers had the support needed to overcome challenges in farming. Under the direction of William “Bill” Barker, who served as a leader for the Bureau from 1956 until his passing in 1999, Monterey County Farm Bureau continued to develop its ability to meet the needs of local farmers and ranchers. Throughout its history, the Bureau has invested time and effort into ensuring that local programs, such as Ag Extension, were available to the community. These local partnerships have been integral to the success of the agricultural industry in my district.

Behind the economic might of agriculture on the central coast of California are individuals that work on the farms and ranches. As an organization, Monterey County Farm Bureau supports local farmers and ranchers by serving as a collective voice for agricultural firms and by providing them with the information, benefits, and services they need to succeed. By collaborating with various agricultural institutions, the Bureau supports farmers by helping them deal with the complex issues facing the agricultural community such as labor, land use, and water policies. The group also provides a vital voice for local agricultural firms by advocating for them on the local, state, and national level. At the 2014 California Farm Bureau Federation’s Annual Meeting, Monterey County Farm Bureau won the District of the Year award for excellence in activities including membership, policy implementation, leadership agricultural education, and public relations. This is a testament to the hard work and tradition of excellence of the Bureau.

As the organization celebrates its centennial anniversary, I am proud to commend Monterey County Farm Bureau for its continued support of those working in agriculture in my district who serve as the cornerstone of the economy. Over the past century, Monterey County’s agriculture industry has grown exponentially and now provides much of the nation’s lettuce, strawberries, broccoli, wine grapes, and over 100 specialty crops. Monterey County Farm Bureau’s support of farmers and ranchers has undoubtedly helped establish regions like the Salinas Valley as the uncontested Salad Bowl of the World. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Monterey County Farm Bureau on 100 years of excellence.

IN RECOGNITION OF BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY OF MEADVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. MIKE KELLY OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church of Meadville, Pennsylvania, and the important contributions it has made to the Meadville area for over 160 years. Since its foundation in 1849 by the Reverend Jacob Parmer, Bethel AME has advanced a vision of outreach and engagement through its vibrant faith community. The church’s present location was constructed in Meadville. This site, according to Gary DeSantis writing in the Meadville Tribune on September 2, 2016, was once used by a former slave from Maryland named Richard Knight to provide shelter for 500 or more slaves escaping the Southern slave holders. This stop on the Underground Railroad gave refuge to escaping travelers through the northern states on their way to Canada.

As the challenges facing our country and our local community continue, Bethel AME has been a constant presence in Meadville. Today its community outreach includes youth drama productions, a women’s ministry, outreach to senior citizens, and many other valuable programs and ministries in Meadville. I am proud to represent the clergy and parishioners of Bethel AME in the House of Representatives. Their history and their present contributions to the community are a credit to the City of Meadville, to Crawford County, and to Pennsylvania’s Third District.

CONGRATULATING CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT GARRATT EDMOND ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Chief Master Sergeant Garrett Edmond, who I have had the privilege of working with for many years. CMSgt Garrett Edmond began his career with the United States Airforce when he enlisted in August, 1985 as an Airman First Class at Warner Robbins Air Force Base in Georgia. He deployed on numerous overseas missions for our country during Desert Storm, Operation Allied Forces, and Operation Southern Watch. Throughout his career, CMSgt Edmond participated in numerous humanitarian projects in the Caribbean and Central and South America. He worked diligently protecting our country.

In recognition of his invaluable contributions to the Air Force, he has received numerous medals during his service, including the Defense Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster. This Medal is awarded to those who display exceptional non-combat achievements or commendable service. He has also received the Air Force Commendation Medal and the Joint Service Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters. All of the medals and awards he has received are an indication of his great service to our country.

I have worked closely with CMSgt Edmond over the years. He has been an instrumental advocate to the Academy. I host which provides information to high school students who have an interest in joining our Armed Forces. His dedication to our country and our youth is commendable.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Chief Master Sergeant Garrett Edmond for his tremendous service to our nation, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALL-EN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER ARMY PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (PFC) WILLIAM BRANDON DAWSON

HON. TRENT KELLY OF MISSISSIPPI
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to rise today in memory of Army Private First Class (PFC) William Brandon Dawson who died while in service to our nation on September 24, 2010, during Operation Enduring Freedom. PFC Dawson was killed when an explosive device detonated close to his military vehicle near Combat Outpost Carwel, Afghanistan. Private First Class (PFC) Jaymee P.S. Petree of Yigo, Guam was also killed.

PFC Dawson was assigned to the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Fort Richard-son, Alaska. According to the Associated Press, PFC Dawson served as a motor transport operator. He was assigned to Fort Richardson in February 2010.

PFC Dawson, a Tunica, Mississippi native, joined the U.S. Army in 2009 shortly after he graduated from Rosa Fort High School in 2008. PFC Dawson’s father, said his son wanted to serve and talked about pursuing a career in politics. “He told me he wanted to be a senator. He could do so many different things,” Rev. Dawson said.
“He made a career choice and he had all the support of his family. He wanted to drive trucks and he wanted to serve his country.”

A number of friends and family members posted a tribute to PFC Dawson on a memorial website. Pennie Smith, PFC Dawson’s cousin, praised the soldier for his service. “Thank you, Brandon and all the brave and courageous soldiers that fight and die for our freedom,” Smith wrote. “I hadn’t seen Brandon since he joined the military, but he was family and I loved him. I pray everyone continues to remember, respect, and honor this fallen hero!”

In 2014, the Tunica County Education Foundation created the Private First Class (PFC) William Brandon Dawson Memorial Scholarship program in his honor. The foundation creators wrote a tribute to PFC Dawson that details the reasons for establishing the scholarship, “Private First Class William Brandon Dawson served in the United States Army in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. He made the ultimate sacrifice for his country and his community on September 24, 2010, and this scholarship has been established to honor his memory, bravery, character, and commitment.”

PFC Dawson is survived by his parents, Reverend Willie Dawson, Jr. and Quita Weedon-Dawson; his stepfather, Elton Tresvant; his grandparents, Marilyn Williams, Willie Dawson, Sr. and Shirley Dawson, Joe Dan Weedon and Julia Weedon; his four brothers, Joseph Dawson, David Dawson, Daniel Dawson, and Elijah Dawson; his three sisters, Gabrielle Dawson, Whitney Robinson, and Kelli Campbell; his uncle, Larry Williams; his aunt, Phillis Williams; his four cousins, Kashia Williams, Erving Nelson Williams, Pennie Smith, and Adam Williams.

PFC Dawson proudly served our nation to protect the freedoms we all enjoy. His service will always be remembered.

IN RECOGNITION OF DEBBIE WATROUS AND HER SERVICE TO NEW HAMPSHIRE HUMANITIES

HON. ANN M. KUSTER
OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my sincere gratitude for Debbie Watrous and her 24 remarkable years of service to New Hampshire Humanities.

Debbie’s time and dedication to serve our state through this organization has been an invaluable contribution, and I congratulate and thank her on her tremendous achievements. Through her role as the Development Director, Director of Special Projects, Associate Director, and most recently as Executive Director, Debbie helped make public programming more accessible. Her work allowed more Granite Staters to discover culture, history, and new ideas.

Now, Debbie will continue her career in service to others with a new position at FoodCorps, where she will work to ensure that children in every school have access to nutritious foods so they can live healthier lives and reach their full potential.

On behalf of New Hampshire’s Second Congressional District and all those who have benefitted from Debbie’s work, I thank her for her many years of service to the Granite State, and wish her the best of luck in her new role.

IN RECOGNITION OF BYRON BUNKER FOR RECEIVING THE SAMUEL J. HEYMAN SERVICE TO AMERICA MEDAL

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Byron Bunker for receiving the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal. Mr. Bunker’s work as Director of Compliance Programs for the Environmental Protection Agency was key to uncovering Volkswagen Group’s automotive emissions evasion scheme and safeguarding public health.

Since 1999, Mr. Bunker has worked for the EPA’s National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which conducts tests to certify that vehicles and engines meet the United States’ emissions and fuel economy standards. As Director of the NVFEL’s Compliance Division, Mr. Bunker tests automobiles and their components to ensure that they comply with clean air regulations. Working in conjunction with academic researchers and other federal officials, Mr. Bunker helped uncover and halt a scheme by Volkswagen to evade emissions standards through the use of software designed to intentionally fool regulators about the true emissions levels of its diesel vehicles. This discovery eventually resulted in the largest penalty ever levied against a car manufacturer and helped lay the foundation for additional criminal investigations. These have resulted in $4.3 billion in civil and criminal penalties, as well as indictments against Volkswagen executives.

Mr. Bunker’s expertise and tireless efforts played a critical role in uncovering this wrongdoing and underscore the importance of the EPA’s enforcement efforts. As a result of Mr. Bunker’s work, the EPA was not only able to detect a sophisticated and widespread emissions evasion scheme, but also strengthen its testing procedures to prevent similar deceptions in the future. Through his rigorous work and collaboration with other officials in the EPA, Mr. Bunker has been an important driver of efforts to protect Americans’ health and the environment, and it is my hope that he continues to effectively safeguard public health and safety in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Byron Bunker for being awarded the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal. Mr. Bunker’s rigorous enforcement work has been important in protecting public health and safety.

IN RECOGNITION OF SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH AND THE NEED TO COMBAT VETERAN SUICIDE

HON. PETER T. KING
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Suicide Prevention Month and to draw attention to the continuing fight against veteran suicide.

Sadly, approximately 20 veterans take their own lives every day. In August 2016 the Veterans Administration released a comprehensive report on veteran suicide. Among the disturbing statistics in this report, it was revealed that though veterans make up 8.5 percent of the U.S. population, they accounted for 18 percent of suicides in 2014. This report also showed that we lost more veterans to suicide in 2014 than soldiers to the battlefield during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom combined. It is clear that for many veterans a more arduous battle with PTSD and mental illness arises after they return from combat.

That is why I am a proud sponsor of H.R. 411, the Veteran Suicide Prevention Act. This bill would require the VA to complete a publicly available review of the deaths of veterans who died by suicide during the preceding five-year period. The review would include key facts, such as the total number of veterans who have died by suicide, a comprehensive list of the medications prescribed to and found in the systems of such veterans, the percentage of such veterans with combat experience or trauma, Veterans Health Administration facilities with disproportionately high rates of psychiatric drug prescriptions and suicide among veterans, and recommendations to improve the safety and well-being of veterans.

This review would provide vital information for identifying risk factors for suicide and improving mental healthcare for veterans. It is through gaining this understanding of the needs of veterans that we can work to stop this terrible epidemic.

HONORING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF KSRO

HON. JARED HUFFMAN
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague Congressman Mike Thompson, to recognize the 80th anniversary of Sonoma County’s KSRO radio station.

When the station first began broadcasting in 1937, KSRO was California’s largest radio station north of the Golden Gate Bridge. Originally located in an old Navy Air Station, KSRO provided homecare, music, and news programs throughout the 1940s and 1950s. The station adopted several formats over the years to match the interests of the day, leaning more heavily into music programming by the 1960s before transitioning into a talk and news centered station in 1987, a format the station continues to maintain to this day.
The tireless efforts of the dysautonomia community to increase research and accessible services will be recognized on Sunday, October 1 in my Congressional District as the color turquoise will bathe Niagara Falls and the Peace Bridge in the light of care, concern and continuing the fight to improve the lives of individuals living with this chronic condition.

Currently, Dysautonomia International is funding research to develop more substantial treatments to help patients get diagnosed and treated earlier, save lives, foster support for individuals and families and hopefully find a cure for all forms of this condition in the future. It is imperative that we also recognize the contributions of the professional medical community, patients, family members and advocates who are working to educate our citizenry about dysautonomia throughout Western New York. They are deserving of our gratitude, recognition, respect and greater understanding.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few moments to recognize Dysautonomia Awareness Month. Many colleagues join me in support for those suffering from the devastating medical condition and encourage them to spread awareness across our nation throughout and beyond the month of October.
Today at least 300,000 people in North America suffer from dystonia, a neurological movement disorder that causes muscles to contract and spasm involuntarily. Joel and Harriet’s daughter Shari—Beth’s sister—had dystonia. The Farber family not only advocated for her, they determined that they would advocate on behalf of the entire dystonia community. They reached out to me and so many others to explain what is known about the disease, its impacts, and the need for expanded medical research and support networks. Over the years, they have continued to come to my office and have traveled the country to push for action.

Dystonia affects men, women and children. For most people with dystonia, the cause remains unknown and there is currently no cure. Dystonia is not usually fatal, but it is a chronic disorder producing symptoms that vary in degree of frequency, intensity, disability, and pain depending on the type of dystonia. The inability to predict or control the movements of the legs, arms, hands, neck, shoulders, face, eyelids, jaw, tongue, or vocal cords has a profound impact on an individual’s life.

Dystonia may be inherited or caused by specific factors such as certain medications or traumatic injury, particularly traumatic head/brain injuries. Our men and women in uniform face the unique risk of developing dystonia as a result of injuries sustained during their military service.

The Dystonia Medical Research Foundation, which works to raise awareness of dystonia, is a nationwide organization that has served the community for more than 40 years. The Dystonia Medical Research Foundation provides the dystonia community with support, education, advocacy, and the promotion of research into the causes of and care of dystonia.

I call on my colleagues to recognize the goals and ideals Dystonia Awareness Month by supporting federal activities that improve the lives of patients impacted by dystonia including research programs at the National Institutes of Health. We need to improve medical research and working to make sure that those living with dystonia receive the quality health and caregiving services they deserve.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ABOLITION AND ECONOMIC AND ENERGY CONVERSION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Nuclear Weapons Abolition and Economic and Energy Conversion Act, a version of which I have introduced since 1994, after working with the District of Columbia residents who were responsible for the Nuclear Disarmament and Economic Conversion ballot initiative passed by D.C. voters in 1993. This version of the bill now requires the United States to immediately begin negotiating an international agreement to disable and dismantle its nuclear weapons, to provide for strict control of fissile material and radioactive waste and to use nuclear-free energy.

The bill continues to provide that the funds used for nuclear weapons programs be redirected to human and infrastructure needs, such as housing, health care, Social Security, restoring the environment and creating carbon-free, nuclear-free energy. This conversion to a和平 economy would occur when the President certifies to Congress that all countries possessing nuclear weapons have begun eliminating their national and international treaty or other legal agreements.

The bill is particularly timely with the ongoing nuclear threat from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Our country still has a long list of urgent domestic needs that have been put on the backburner. As the only nation that has used nuclear weapons in war, and that still possesses the largest nuclear weapons arsenal, I urge support for my bill to help the United States reestablish our moral leadership in the world by redirecting funds that would otherwise go to nuclear weapons to urgent domestic needs.

HONOR THE LIFE OF LESTER MANDELL

HON. STEPHANIE N. MURPHY
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Lester Mandell, who transformed countless communities in central Florida through his work as a builder and transformed countless lives through his generosity as a philanthropist. Lester passed away recently at the age of 96, leaving behind a large and loving family, but his legacy will live on.

Born in a hardy, Brooklyn neighborhood, and a veteran of World War II, Lester did not graduate from college. However, neither his lack of formal eduction nor the anti-Semitism he frequently faced could stop Lester from achieving his professional goals, because they were no match for his talent, tenacity and toughness. Lester's life was a quintessential American story of success earned through hard, disciplined, joyful work.

As one of Lester's grandsons said about his grandfather, "He believed that, if you did things the right way, you would get the right result." This is the essence of character. Lester was a master builder, in both the literal and figurative sense. The homes, neighborhoods, and public parks he developed throughout central Florida over the course of many decades are his most visible legacy. Lester also built bonds of a more intangible nature. He donated generously to many community, education, and advocacy, and the promotion of research into the causes of and care of dystonia.

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The bill continues to provide that the funds used for nuclear weapons programs be redirected to human and infrastructure needs, such as housing, health care, Social Security, restoring the environment and creating carbon-free, nuclear-free energy. This conversion to a peace economy would occur when the President certifies to Congress that all countries possessing nuclear weapons have begun eliminating their national and international treaty or other legal agreements.

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IN RECOGNITION OF STEVE NORTON AND HIS SERVICE AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY STUDIES

HON. ANN M. KUSTER
OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Steve Norton as he leaves the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies after 12 years of remarkable service to begin a new chapter in his life.

As Executive Director of the Center, Steve helped raise new ideas and improve policy debates through quality information and analysis on issues that are shaping New Hampshire’s future. In his previous role as director of Medicaid Services for the N.H. Department of Health and Human Services, Steve worked to ensure vulnerable Granite Staters had access to quality, affordable health coverage.

Through his commitment to public service, Steve has helped improve the lives of countless families and communities in need, and his vision has aided in creating a better future for the Granite State and its residents.

On behalf of New Hampshire’s Second Congressional District and all those who have benefitted from Steve’s work, I thank him for all he has done for our state. I look forward to our continued work together to make New Hampshire be an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.
THE OVERCRIMINALIZATION OF IMPEACHMENT

HON. AL GREEN
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to include the following CATO article for the RECORD:

[From CATO.org, Aug. 7, 2017]

By Gene Healy

Trying to tamp down impeachment talk earlier this month, House Speaker Paul Ryan told Nancy Pelosi that impeachment "is not a punishment that’s been violated," Brat kept insisting: They cannot name the statute.

Actually, they can. It’s "Obstruction of Justice, as defined in 18 U.S.C. §1512(b)(3)," according to Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) who introduced an article of impeachment against Trump on July 12. Did Trump break that law when he fired FBI director James Comey "over this Russia thing?" Maybe. Not. But even if "no reasonable prosecutor" would bring a charge of obstruction on the available evidence, that wouldn’t mean impeachment is off-limits. Impeachable offenses aren’t limited to crimes.

That’s a settled point among constitutional scholars: even those, like Cass Sunstein, who take a restrictive view of the scope of "high Crimes and Misdemeanors" recognize that "an impeachable offense, to qualify as such, need not be a crime." University of Northern Carolina law professor Michael Gerhardt sums up the academic consensus: "The major disagreement is not over whether impeachable offenses should be strictly limited to indictable crimes, but rather over the range of nonindictable offenses on which an impeachment may be based.

In some ways, popular confusion on this point is understandable. Impeachment’s structure sounds judicial. Impeachment is the House’s way of calling a judge to "account for the conduct of his office." For James Madison, impeachment was the "indispensable" remedy for "Incapacity, negligence, or perfidy" on the part of the president—categories of conduct dangerous to the republic, only some of which will also constitute crimes.

The criminal law is designed to punish and deter, but those goals are secondary to impeachment, which aims at removing federal officers unfit for continued service. And where the law deprives an accused of a protected right of the accused party of liberty, the constitutional penalties for impeachable offenses "shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and possible disqualification from future officeholding. As Justice Joseph Story explained, the remedy is "is not so much designed to be a punishment of the individual, as to repress the same conduct state against gross official misdemeanors. It touches neither his person, nor his property; but simply divests him of his political capacity."

No doubt being ejected from a position of power on the grounds that you’re no longer worthy of the trust the public feel will be enough punishment. But the mere fact that removal is stigmatizing doesn’t suggest that criminal law standards apply. Even Ronald Reagan once illustrated that point with an analogy Donald Trump would probably find insulting: "to the extent that impeachment retains a residual punitive aura, it may be compared to deportation, which is attended by very painful consequences, but which, the Supreme Court held, is not a punishment for a crime."

Had the Framers extended further than to removal from Office, they’d have rendered the power a "nullity" from the start. In the early Republic, impeachable offenses were mostly statutory offenses, and certainly not enough to cover the range of misdeeds that would rightly disqualify public officials from continued service.

Criminality wasn’t an issue in the first impeachment to result in the removal of a federal official. In 1804, Judge John Pickering was impeached for "incompetence". Had the Framers intended impeachment to statutory offenses, they’d have rendered the power a "nullity" from the start. In the early Republic, impeachable offenses were mostly statutory offenses, and certainly not enough to cover the range of misdeeds that would rightly disqualify public officials from continued service.

Criminality wasn’t an issue in the first impeachment to result in the removal of a federal official. In 1804, Judge John Pickering was impeached for "incompetence," whose contempt for the rule of law is apparent. And it can leave the country saddled with a dangerously unfit president whose contempt for the rule of law may be apparent, even if he hasn’t yet committed a crime.

It’s important to get this straight, because impeaching with a criminal process can be harmful to our political health. It may allow us to treat the criminal law to "get" the president or his associates, warping its future application to ordinary citizens. And it can leave the country with a dangerously unfit president whose contempt for the rule of law is apparent, even if he hasn’t yet committed a crime.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI MARINE LANCE CORPORAL (LCPL) JOSHUA SCOTT OSE

HON. TREV TRENLEY
OF MISSISSIPPI
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of fallen Mississippi Marine Lance Corporal (LCpl) Joshua Scott Ose who gave his life while in service to our nation on September 20, 2010, during Operation Enduring Freedom. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and the Silver Star for his valor.

LCpl Ose enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps during his senior year at Hernando High School in 2009. Sissy Fernandez Ose, LCpl Ose’s mother, said her son began talking about serving in the military when he was in the sixth grade. "That was all he wanted to do," Mrs. Ose said. "It was his choice. He was very proud."

Reverend Robert A. Hatcher, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Hernando, delivered the eulogy at the funeral which was held at the Trinity Baptist Church in Southaven. According to the Associated Press, Rev. Hatcher...
praised LCpl Ose for his service. "Josh was fighting to keep terrorism away from American soil," Rev. Hatcher said. "Some may question the philosophy of war, but do not question this young man’s desire to put an end to terrorism. He did not shirk his duty to fight for America."

Lee Caldwell, a family friend, said LCpl Ose set a great example for others to follow. "He was an exemplary young man," Mrs. Caldwell said. "He paid the ultimate sacrifice. We will never forget him and all those who have fought for our country as he did."

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Colonel (Col) John Caldwell was asked by the family to escort LCpl Ose’s body from Dover Air Force Base to the First Presbyterian Church of Hernando where a visitation was held. Col Caldwell said LCpl Ose was a true hero. "He epitomized what it was to be a Marine," Col Caldwell said. "He wanted to represent his country and fight. He and Marines like him are true heroes. We need to remember them every day. We need to remember them for paying the ultimate price."

In 2011, the Mississippi State Legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution No. 49. The resolution commended LCpl Ose for his service. It further stated that LCpl Ose is counted among Mississippi and America heroes who committed to our nation’s safety and security.

LCpl Ose is survived by his parents, Ross and Sissy Fernandez Ose; grandparents, Earl and Darlene Ose; aunts and uncles, Brenda and John Conrad, Sherry and Scott Fernandez, Dr. Dennis and Dr. Wendy Ose, and Paul and Sarah Ose.

LCpl Ose will always be remembered for his sacrifice to protect America.

125TH ANNIVERSARY ALLEGHENY COUNTY ANCIENT ORDER OF Hibernians, DIVISION 17

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE
OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Allegheny County Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 17, which is currently celebrating its 125th anniversary as a pillar of Irish-American heritage and charitable service in the Pittsburgh region.

The AOH has its roots in the efforts by the Tudor Kings and Queens of England to impose greater control over the Irish. These efforts affected most aspects of life, from language and religion to law and politics to land ownership—and even clothing. Secret societies formed to protect Irish Catholics from government excesses and extrajudicial violence.

Faced with centuries of English oppression, as well as a series of crop failures, many Irish emigrated in search of better opportunities. A great many came to America, but found they were forced to confront the same anti-Catholic prejudice that they had faced back home. In response to this discrimination, Irish Americans began forming fraternal organizations to combat anti-Irish prejudice, support each other, and keep their culture and religion alive.

In May 1836, the first and largest of these groups, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, was founded simultaneously in New York City and Pottsville, Pennsylvania.

Through the rest of the nineteenth century, the AOH grew significantly, opening its first division in Allegheny County in 1859. Allegheny County Division 17 was established in 1892. During this time, in addition to working to preserve their Irish heritage and lobby the Pennsylvania state government to support Irish independence.

Today, the AOH stands as a testament to the tenacity of the Irish people, a celebration of our culture, and a monument to a people who helped build this country. I’m proud to be of Irish ancestry—and to be a member of Allegheny County Division 17 of the AOH. As we commemorate the AOH’s legacy of faith and perseverance in the face of adversity, let us also take inspiration from its story and recognize the responsibility each of us shares to help make our nation as welcoming a land as our ancestors dreamed it would be.

I would like to congratulate Allegheny County Division 17 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians on the occasion of their 125th anniversary. I commend them for their service to their community, and I wish them the best in the years to come. Ireland Forever (Erin go Bragh).

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. TRICIA DERGEs

HON. BILLY LONG
OF MISSOURI
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Tricia Derge of Springfield, Missouri, on her recent winning of two prestigious awards.

Dr. Derge has been a resident of the Springfield area for 40 years and during this time she has contributed to the community in many ways. Dr. Derge has recently won both the National Jefferson Award for Southwest Missouri, and the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award. Both of these awards recognize individuals for their public service. The Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award is only awarded to five individuals per year across the United States. This clearly highlights the significant work Dr. Derge has taken over the years to help her community.

Dr. Derge set up the mission clinic named Lift Up in Springfield. This clinic provides a range of medical, dental and mental health services to veterans and the poor across Springfield. Dr. Derge and her clinic have helped thousands of people in the Springfield area.

I am truly honored to recognize the work by Dr. Derge and her dedication to improving the lives of others. On behalf of Missouri’s 7th Congressional District’s 14 colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Derge on her recent awards and wishing her all the best.

IN RECOGNITION OF WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY RENAMING RESIDENCE HALLS IN HONOR OF DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the occasion of Western Michigan University recognizing a lifetime of work by three leaders who bonded in college and remained friends through life, by naming two residence halls within the Western Heights complex Hall-Archer, Pickard West and Hall-Derges. Dormitories are being renamed in celebration of three legendary Western Michigan graduates, and their legacy will inspire generations of university students to come.

Ronald Hall Sr., Dennis Archer, and William Pickard attended Western Michigan University in the 1960s and enjoyed membership in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, America’s first intercollegiate African-American fraternity. The three men’s undergraduate experience at Western Michigan University instilled a desire to give back to the greater Michigan community and invest in meaningful educational and social change throughout the state. Hall, Archer, and Pickard are remembered for the close, meaningful friendship they cultivated at Western Michigan and their passion to make change after graduating.

After graduating from Western Michigan University, the three men remained in Michigan to influence change to the community they love. Ronald Hall Sr. served as president of the Michigan Minority Business Development Council and founded Bridgewater Interiors, LLC. He passed away in May 2016, and is remembered for turning Michigan’s Minority Business Development Council into one of the country’s lead minority business organizations.

Dennis Archer served as Mayor of Detroit from 1994 to 2001, and has served as president of the Amexion Bank and the Michigan State Bar Association. Dennis Pickard is an executive member of the NAACP Detroit Branch, and is the founder of the Michigan-based Global Automotive Alliance. Their postgraduate work has impacted countless lives and opened doors wider for students of color, and it is an honor to recognize the meaningful bonds forged during college.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Western Michigan University and
URGING CONGRESS TO ADDRESS EPIDEMIC OF VETERAN SUICIDE

HON. MARC A. VEASEY
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I work to ensure that our service members receive all the resources they need when they volunteer to defend the United States. But it is important that Congress not only provides them with support during their service, but in the years after they faithfully executed their duties as a member of the Armed Services. That is why I rise today to address the epidemic of veteran suicide in our country.

September is recognized as “National Suicide Awareness Month” and currently our veterans are suffering from a substantially higher rate of suicide than the general population. According to a 2014 report by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), 20 veterans take their lives every day, a rate that is 150 percent greater than the general population. Although the VA has dedicated a significant amount of effort and resources to address veteran suicide, the fact remains that of the 20 average veterans who die by suicide, on a daily basis, 14 were not utilizing VA services. As the 2016 VA report “Suicide Among Veterans and Other Americans” explains, up to 22 percent of Post-9/11 veterans have depression disorders, and up to 43 percent of all struggle with symptoms of mental health issues, such as drinking excessively, smoking, and/or sleeplessness. In addition, female veterans and those living in rural areas face a higher risk of suicide and we must address the barriers to care for these populations.

It is clear that we must extend more resources to help our veterans and prevent the unnecessary loss of life. The VA’s 2016 study and upgrading crisis hotlines are steps in the right direction, fully addressing veteran suicide remains a complex issue that will require a multi-faceted approach. But their suffering does not have to continue and we must reverse the trend of veteran suicide.

Raising awareness about the issue begins in Congress, but every day citizens can also join in the effort year-round. Moreover, the effort to raise awareness about veteran suicide will have benefits across our society as a whole, contributing to the de-stigmatization of mental health issues. It is no secret that the stigma surrounding mental health prevents many veterans from obtaining care for these issues, forcing our country’s heroes and heroines to suffer in silence. De-stigmatizing mental health care is critical to open up dialogue about a pervasive issue and provides opportunities for treatment and prevention of suicide.

In addition, Congress must provide the VA with additional resources so that they better serve the female and rural veteran population with care and extending care to remote, rural areas. We must continue to support innovation within the VA so that the agency will be more willing to embrace new approaches to treatment, such as canine service animals, art and outdoor therapies. It goes without saying that we owe our veterans a tremendous debt for their service to our nation in defense of the freedoms we all enjoy. In return, we must care for them as a top priority and de-stigmatizing care throughout society, in addition to embracing innovative modes of therapy and furthering the VA’s outreach will go a long way to honoring the service of veterans to our nation. I urge my colleagues to join me in ensuring that we address the veteran suicide epidemic immediately.

HONORING HOMETOWN NEWSPAPERS

HON. KRISTI L. NOEM
OF SOUTH DAKOTA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, in honor of National Newspaper Week, I rise today to recognize the 126 individual news organizations of South Dakota. Living in the information age, data is constantly at our fingertips. It is the local newspaper, though, that tells the story of everyday life and America and documents community history in a way that will forever be available to future generations. The local news reminds us that the world is made of neighborhoods and shared experiences, that love of country still exists, and that diversity of opinion truly makes our country great.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press must ever be protected, for it is only through a free system that democracy can thrive. As Thomas Jefferson said, “Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.”

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in thanking local journalists, particularly those serving South Dakota, for giving a voice to the individual and cultivating the road to free speech for all.

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACT OF 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. LOIS FRANKEL
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 25, 2017

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this critical bill that will help ensure that women have a meaningful role in peace and security around the world. From Syria to Myanmar to South Sudan, violent conflicts are becoming more widespread and deadly. Women in conflict zones suffer tremendously, and women and girls make up around half of any refugee population, where they are at risk of unspeakable violence.

But women are not only victims. They also help moderate violent extremism and are key to securing peace through a wide strategy to promote women’s participation in conflict prevention and resolution.

I’d like to commend the progress made under President Obama on this issue, which includes issuing the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. In the last five years alone, the percentage of peace agreements referencing gender equality has increased from 22 to 70 percent.

We have an opportunity to make our voice heard on the issue of women in conflict. The UN Security Council will convene next month to discuss its open debate on Women, Peace, and Security. The United States should highlight its commitment to ensuring women’s equal participation in peacemaking, and protecting their physical and economic security. That begins with sending a high-level delegation.

I urge adoption of the bill.

INDIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY FIGHTS HURRICANE HARVEY

HON. TED POE
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, since Hurricane Harvey hit our area last month, stories of Harvey Heroes continue to bring our community together and make us grateful for the incredible people that we call neighbors. There are many uplifting stories of those who grabbed their personal boats and set out in the waters to rescue individuals, many of whom they did not know. Our first responders answered the call time and time again. And so did many people we may never know. For all of them, we thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

So many people have opened their homes, their hearts, and their wallets to help Houston recover. One such community was the Indian-American community right in the greater Houston area. They have already raised over $1.6 million dollars: 700 Indian-American volunteers have dedicated more than 24,000 hours to their city, and together, they have distributed over 26,000 meals to our neighbors in need.

And one specific story I thought of is that of a group of Indian-Americans, led by Houstonian, Jiten Agrawal, made their way through the unparalleled flooding after the Hurricane to reach a student apartment complex near my alma mater, the University of Houston, that had been flooded and was without power. The president of the Indian graduate students’ organization, Ravi Shankar, reached out to the community to help, and help is what they gave. These volunteer rescuers brought food and water to over 180 students, helped transport them back to their families or a safe location.

We are grateful to these volunteers, some of the many Harvey Heroes, for helping...
Houstonians get through a very difficult time. They are just one of the reasons why we are Houston Strong.

And that’s just the way it is.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, September 28, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today’s RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

OCTOBER 3

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of John Marshall Mitnick, of Virginia, to be General Counsel, Department of Homeland Security.

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine Wells Fargo one year later.

Committee on Finance
To hold hearings to examine international tax reform.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine the Every Student Succeeds Act, focusing on unleashing State innovation.

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Administration’s decision to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Joint Economic Committee
To hold hearings to examine tax reform and entrepreneurship.

OCTOBER 4

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the Equifax cybersecurity breach.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

Committee on Environment and Public Works
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Michael Dourson, of Ohio, to be Assistant Administrator for Toxic Substances, and Michael Dourson, of Florida, David Ross, of Wisconsin, and William L. Wehrum, of Delaware, each to to be an Assistant Administrator, all of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Jeffery Martin Baran, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Stephanie Bibas, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, Liles Clayton Burke, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama, Michael Joseph Juneau, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, A. Marvin Quattlebaum, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina, Tilman Eugene SIII, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Georgia, and John C. Demers, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice.

Committee on Indian Affairs
To hold a hearing to examine the nominations of G. Zatezalo, of West Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Management, and David W. Bernhard, of Florida, to be Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budgets, and David T. Beczkiewicz, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budgets, and David T. Beczkiewicz, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budgets.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Melissa Sue Glynn, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary (Education and Employment), Cheryl L. Mason, of Virginia, to be Chairman of the Board of Veterans’ Appeals, and Randy Reeves, of Mississippi, to be Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, all of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Leryl Marie Stanek, of South Carolina, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, and David G. Zatezalo, of West Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Management, and Matthew Z. Leopold, of Ohio, to be Assistant Administrator for Toxic Substances, and Melissa Sue Glynn, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Michael Dourson, of Ohio, to be Assistant Administrator for Toxic Substances, and Michael Dourson, of Florida, David Ross, of Wisconsin, and William L. Wehrum, of Delaware, each to to be an Assistant Administrator, all of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Jeffery Martin Baran, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Stephanie Bibas, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, Liles Clayton Burke, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama, Michael Joseph Juneau, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, A. Marvin Quattlebaum, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina, Tilman Eugene SIII, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Georgia, and John C. Demers, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice.

Committee on Indian Affairs
To hold a hearing to examine the nominations of G. Zatezalo, of West Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Management, and David W. Bernhard, of Florida, to be Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budgets, and David T. Beczkiewicz, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budgets.
to be General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board.

OCTOBER 5
10 a.m.
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine the Federal response to the opioid crisis.
SD-430

OCTOBER 18
10 a.m.
Committee on the Judiciary
To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Department of Justice.
SH-216

OCTOBER 25
9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To receive a closed briefing on the major threats facing naval forces and the Navy’s current and planned capabilities to meet those threats.
SVC-217
Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S6159–S6192

Measures Introduced: Twelve bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 1869–1880, and S. Res. 269. Pages S6186–87

Measures Passed:

Veterans Affairs: Senate passed H.R. 3819, to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Page S6191

Bankruptcy Judgeship Act: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2266, to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto:

Inhofe (for Grassley) Amendment No. 1106, in the nature of a substitute. Page S6191

National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 269, designating September 2017 as “National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month”. Page S6192

Measures Considered:

National Defense Authorization Act: Senate continued consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1519, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year. Pages S6159–75

Erickson Nomination—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of the nomination of Ralph R. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit. Pages S6179–84

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination at approximately 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, September 28, 2017, with the time until the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination equally divided between the two Leaders or their designees. Page S6192

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 87 yeas to 8 nays (Vote No. EX. 204), Heath P. Tarbert, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. Pages S6175–79, S6192

By 73 yeas to 21 nays (Vote No. EX. 205), Makan Delrahim, of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General. Pages S6175–79, S6192

1 Marine Corps nomination in the rank of general.

Messages from the House:

Measures Placed on the Calendar:

Executive Communications:

Additional Cosponsors:

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:

Additional Statements:

Authorities for Committees to Meet:

Privileges of the Floor:

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—205) Page S6179

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:23 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, September 28, 2017. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S6192.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, for reappointment to the grade of general and reappointment to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
NOMINATIONS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Ann Marie Buerkle, of New York, to be Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Howard R. Elliott, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, Walter G. Copan, of Colorado, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology, who was introduced by Senator Gardner, and Timothy Gallaudet, of California, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, who was introduced by Senator Wicker, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

NATIONAL PARKS

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks concluded a hearing to examine encouraging the next generation to visit National Parks, after receiving testimony from Lena McDowall, Deputy Director for Management and Administration, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Yennie Solheim Fuller, Niantic, Inc., San Francisco, California; John Leong, Kupu, Honolulu, Hawaii; Angela Fultz Nordstrom, NIC Inc., Brentwood, Tennessee; Tim Rout, AccessParks, La Jolla, California; and Will Shafroth, National Park Foundation, Washington, D.C.

FOREST MANAGEMENT TO MITIGATE WILDFIRES

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine forest management to mitigate wildfires, focusing on legislative solutions, including S. 605, to amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to discourage litigation against the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management relating to land management projects, S. 1417, to require the Secretary of the Interior to develop a categorical exclusion for covered vegetative management activities carried out to establish or improve habitat for greater sage-grouse and mule deer, and S. 1731, to address the forest health crisis on National Forest System land, after receiving testimony from Senators Hatch, Thune, Tester, and Daines; Jessica Crowder, Office of Wyoming Governor Matthew H. Mead, Cheyenne; Lawson Fite, American Forest Resource Council, Portland, Oregon; and Collin O’Mara, National Wildlife Federation, Reston, Virginia.

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and Daniel J. Kritenbrink, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, both of the Department of State, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

THREATS TO THE HOMELAND

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine threats to the homeland, after receiving testimony from Elaine C. Duke, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security; Christopher A. Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice; and Nicholas J. Rasmussen, Director, National Counterterrorism Center.

GAO REPORTS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF NATIVE AMERICANS

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Government Accountability Office reports on human trafficking of Native Americans in the United States, including actions needed to better report on victims served, after receiving testimony from Gretta L. Goodwin, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, Government Accountability Office; Tracy Toulou, Director, Office of Tribal Justice, Department of Justice; Jason Thompson, Acting Director, Office of Justice Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; Nicole Matthews, Minnesota Indian Women’s Sexual
Assault Coalition, St. Paul; and Cindy McCain, Arizona Governor’s Human Trafficking Council, Phoenix.

SBA RESPONSE TO 2017 HURRICANES
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Small Business Administration’s response to the 2017 hurricanes, after receiving testimony from James Rivera, Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance, Small Business Administration; Daniel Davis, JAX Chamber, Jacksonville, Florida; and Steven K. Lawrence, University of Houston Bauer College of Business, Houston, Texas, on behalf of the Texas Gulf Coast Small Business Development Center Network.

PREVENTING VETERAN SUICIDE
Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine preventing veteran suicide, after receiving testimony from David J. Shulkin, Secretary, and John D. Daigh, Jr., Assistant Inspector General for Healthcare Inspections, Office of Inspector General, both of the Department of Veterans Affairs; Craig J. Bryan, The University of Utah National Center for Veterans Studies, Salt Lake City; and Matt Kuntz, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Helena, Montana.

INTELLIGENCE
Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 15 public bills, H.R. 3845–3859; and 4 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 81; and H. Res. 541–543 were introduced.

Additional Cosponsors:

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 3281, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to facilitate the transfer to non-Federal ownership of appropriate reclamation projects or facilities, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–334).

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Pastor Dennis Jokela, Chaplain, Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department, Kalamazoo, MI.

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Fair Access to Investment Research Act of 2017: S. 327, to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to provide a safe harbor related to certain investment fund research reports; and Protecting the safety of judges by extending the authority of the Judicial Conference to redact sensitive information contained in their financial disclosure reports.

Suspension—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and agree to the following measure. Consideration began Monday, September 25th.

Recognizing that for 50 years the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has worked toward stability, prosperity, and peace in Southeast Asia: H. Res. 311, amended, recognizing that for 50 years the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has worked toward stability, prosperity, and peace in Southeast Asia, by a 2/3 yeas-and-nays vote of 413 yeas with none voting “nay”, Roll No. 540; and Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “Reaffirming the 40 years of relations between the United States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the shared pursuit of economic growth and regional security in Southeast Asia.”.

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, September 28.

Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017: The House considered H.R. 3823, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of
the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and to provide disaster tax relief. Further proceedings were postponed.

Pursuant to the Rule, the amendment printed in H. Rept. 115–333 shall be considered as adopted.

H. Res. 538, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3823) was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 223 yeas to 190 nays, Roll No. 539, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 223 yeas to 187 nays, Roll No. 538.

Senate Referrals: S. 1866 was held at the desk. S. 1028 was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce. S. 504 was held at the desk. S. 1057 was held at the desk. S. 870 was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Senate Messages: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today and message received from the Senate appear on page H7540.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H7551–52. H7552, and H7552–53. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 3 p.m. and adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Committee Meetings

THE ARMY’S TACTICAL NETWORK MODERNIZATION STRATEGY
Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces held a hearing entitled “The Army’s Tactical Network Modernization Strategy”. Testimony was heard from the following U.S. Army officers: Lieutenant General Bruce T. Crawford, Deputy Chief of Staff, G–6; Gary Martin, Program Executive Officer, Command, Control and Communications-Tactical; and Major General James J. Mingus, Director, Mission Command Center of Excellence.

OVERVIEW OF THE FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM
Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance held a hearing entitled “Overview of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

BURMA’S BRUTAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE ROHINGYA
Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific held a hearing entitled “Burma’s Brutal Campaign Against the Rohingya”. Testimony was heard from Michael F. Martin, Specialist in Asian Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; and public witnesses.

RWANDA: DEMOCRACY THWARTED
Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled “Rwanda: Democracy Thwarted”. Testimony was heard from Donald Yamamoto, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs, Department of State; and public witnesses.

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS TO REDUCE RISKS OF CATASTROPHIC WILDFIRE AND IMPROVE RESILIENCY OF NATIONAL FORESTS
Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled “Exploring Solutions to Reduce Risks of Catastrophic Wildfire and Improve Resiliency of National Forests”. Testimony was heard from Greg Chilcott, Commissioner, Ravalli County, Montana; and public witnesses.

HOW TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO GI BILL APPROVED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AND HOW THESE PROGRAMS BENEFIT VETERANS
Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing entitled “How to Improve Access to GI Bill Approved Apprenticeship Programs and How these Programs Benefit Veterans”. Testimony was heard from Major General Robert M. Worley II, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold hearings to examine rural development and energy programs, focusing on perspectives for the 2018 Farm Bill, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Armed Services: to receive a closed briefing on North Korea, 10 a.m., SVC–217.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine evaluating sanctions enforcement and policy options on North Korea, focusing on Administration perspectives, 9:30 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security, to hold hearings to examine Transportation Security Administration modernization, focusing on improvements to aviation security, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: business meeting to consider the nominations of Patrick Pizzella, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, Janet Dhillon, of Pennsylvania, and Daniel M. Gade, of North Dakota, both to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and Carlos G. Muniz, of Florida, to be General Counsel, Department of Education, 10:45 a.m., S–216, Capitol.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 1766, to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, and the nominations of Amy Coney Barrett, of Indiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit, Joan Louise Larsen, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, William L. Campbell, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee, Thomas Lee Robinson Parker, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, and Eric S. Dreiband, of Maryland, and Brian Allen Benczkowski, of Virginia, both to be an Assistant Attorney General, Halsey B. Frank, to be United States Attorney for the District of Maine, D. Michael Hurst, Jr., to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi, Jeffrey B. Jensen, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri, Thomas L. Kirsch II, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana, and William J. Powell, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of West Virginia, all of the Department of Justice, 9:30 a.m., SD–226.

House

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, hearing entitled “Examining Insurance for Nonprofit Organizations”, 9:30 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, markup on H. Res. 422, urging the adherence to the “one country, two systems” policy as prescribed in the Joint Declaration between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Question of the Hong Kong; H.R. 425, the “FTO Passport Revocation Act of 2017”; H.R. 1196, the “Counterterrorism Screening and Assistance Act of 2017”; H.R. 2658, the “Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act of 2017”; H.R. 3320, to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization, and for other purposes; H.R. 3342, the “Sanctioning Hizballah’s Illicit Use of Civilians as Defenseless Shields Act”; H.R. 3445, the “AGOA and MCA Modernization Act”; H.R. 3329, the “Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2017”; and H.R. 1660, the “Global Health Innovation Act of 2017”, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law, hearing entitled “Rulemakers Must Follow the Rules, Too: Oversight of Agency Compliance with the Congressional Review Act”, 9:30 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1159, the “United States and Israel Space Cooperation Act”, 9 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Research and Technology; and Subcommittee on Space, joint hearing entitled “The Great American Eclipse: To Totality and Beyond”, 9:30 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.
Next Meeting of the SENATE
9:30 a.m., Thursday, September 28
Senate Chamber
Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Ralph R. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination at 10:30 a.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
9 a.m., Thursday, September 28
House Chamber

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