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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Hear our prayers, Eternal God, as You bend Your ears toward us. Provide for the needs of the high and low, the rich and poor, the just and unjust.

Empower our Senators to love even their enemies, to bless those who curse them, and to pray for those who seek to misuse them. Lord, give our lawmakers lips that speak wisdom, hearts that love purity, and minds that embrace understanding. Deliver them from fear, even in calamitous times. May they not trust in wealth or might but put their faith in You, the author and finisher of destinies.

We pray in Your marvelous 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, October 3, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning our thoughts and prayers continue to be with those in Las Vegas who suffered a horrendous massacre. We will all be praying for them and hoping they can recover from these grievous wounds.

THE BUDGET AND TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, last week the chairman of the Budget Committee unveiled a comprehensive budget for fiscal year 2018 that the committee will consider this week. This comprehensive budget resolution provides a path to balance by restraining Washington's spending, by reducing the tax burden, and by putting our country on a trajectory for better economic growth. I look forward to considering it on the floor after the committee finishes its work.

Not only will this budget put our country on a better fiscal track, with reduced spending, it will also provide Congress with legislative authority to enact much needed tax reform for hard-working American families.

The tax framework released by the administration and Congress's tax-writing committees is a template that will guide these committees as they work toward producing pro-American tax reform. The framework envisions a

21st-century tax code that is built for growth, that supports middle-class families, and that promotes American workers and American jobs. It is the framework our committees will look to as they work through a transparent and inclusive process in pursuit of its important goals, such as more jobs, fairer taxes, and bigger paychecks.

Basically, here is what our framework envisions: We want to take more money out of Washington's pocket and put more in yours, simply put. I know the chairman of the Finance Committee is committed to goals like those. I know I am. I hope our friends across the aisle will work with us in a serious way to achieve them as well because after decades of lost economic opportunities, it is time to get our economy on the right track again so it can finally grow at its full potential.

Let's shift our economy into high gear with pro-jobs tax reform. Let's put our finances on a better path with Chairman ENZI's budget. Let's watch the good work of each initiative advance within the Finance and Budget Committees this week, including the Finance Committee hearing on tax reform this morning.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, last week Congress passed legislation to reauthorize the FAA, including its authority to collect and spend money for repairs and replacement parts for our air traffic control system. I am proud that we worked together to get this bill over the finish line. Now the FAA can continue to play a critical role in the Federal Government's response to the powerful hurricanes that have hit our country.

HURRICANE RECOVERY EFFORTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the President is on his way to Puerto Rico

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



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to survey the hurricane damage personally and see how the Federal Government can continue to assist in the recovery efforts.

Our thoughts remain with the hurricane victims as they continue to piece their lives and communities back together.

During his visit, the President will have the opportunity to see the resilience of the Puerto Rican people. He can also witness the overwhelming support of their fellow Americans who have volunteered to help deliver relief. Much of that support has come from the military, including the men and women of Kentucky's own Air and Army National Guard, who have helped bring relief to Texas, Florida, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Just last week, the 101st Airborne Combat Aviation Brigade deployed from Fort Campbell in my home State to help support relief efforts in Puerto Rico.

President Trump will also have the chance to see the groundswell of generosity from our communities. Many donated money, food, and other essentials. Other brave Americans left their homes behind to go to the disaster sites to offer aid.

I am especially proud to recognize some of the Kentuckians who have volunteered to join the relief efforts in the wake of these storms.

The Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services selected eight fire departments from around my State to send to Florida to assist local operations after Hurricane Irma. Working 12-hour shifts, these firefighters responded to 911 calls in Tampa as residents began to move back into their homes.

Throughout my State, churches and nonprofits sent volunteers to help however they could. One religious organization arranged more than 200 volunteers to help flood victims in Texas and Florida. In all, they served over 78,000 meals, helped with laundry, and distributed many bottles of water.

The Kentucky Humane Society stepped in to care for pets that were affected, and chapters of the American Red Cross from across the Commonwealth have mobilized to help where needed.

The Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives sent dozens of linemen to Georgia to help restore power after Hurricane Irma. The joint effort from 17 of our State's electric cooperatives represents one of the largest mutual deployments in Kentucky's history.

These Kentuckians, along with so many more, have generously given their time and labor to help their fellow Americans during this time of suffering. And they aren't alone. Compassionate men and women from around the country have joined the cause to help ease the pain of the victims.

Along with my colleagues in the Senate, I am committed to continuing to do our part to support relief efforts with FEMA, the Department of Defense, and the rest of the administra-

tion. We will soon receive a supplemental funding request from the administration. When we do, I expect Congress will act quickly to ensure that the men and women providing critical support in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have the resources they need. The Senate will continue to stand with those suffering from these devastating storms.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Cissna nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lee Francis Cissna, of Maryland, to be Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, the Nation continues to reel from the awful events of Sunday night in Las Vegas—the most deadly mass shooting in modern American history. It has gotten even deadlier in the last 24 hours, with 59 dead and 527 injured—some wounded by gunfire, some injured because they were trampled in the chaos. There were 22,000 concertgoers who fled for their lives from the scene. The police found 23 guns in the hotel room of the monster who committed this atrocity and 19 more at his home. Some of them had been modified to cause even more carnage.

Of course, as always, the beauty of the American people and the first responders pulled through. I saw on TV today a man who had been shot. Two young women came and risked their lives while those shots were going.

They took off his belt and tied a tourniquet around his upper thigh because he was bleeding profusely from his leg. They saved his life. He said he will never know who they are, but they saved his life. That story, I am sure, will be repeated over and over again. The valor, the bravery of the average American and the greatness of our first responders is the only counterpoint to the evil, the carnage, the horror we have all witnessed.

We cannot banish evil or madness from the Earth, but we sure can do what we can in our power to make our country a safer place. We need commonsense reforms, and these reforms have broad public support.

In the face of tens of thousands of gun deaths every year, too many Republicans in Congress have tried to enact the dream agenda of the NRA and the gun lobby. They have pursued a national concealed carry law. Can you imagine if that were to have passed? This horrible man could have concealed carry under the laws of Nevada and gone to Times Square in New York City or to Walt Disney World in Florida and just shot away.

Most of our police organizations are against this concealed carry bill. In light of the carnage, in knowing of the evil that exists, with the power of evil magnified by guns and automatic weapons, how can we try to pursue it?

What about gun silencers? There is a move actually in this Congress—it is in the House right now, and I am sure it has support on the other side of the aisle in the Senate—to make it easier for citizens to acquire silencers. Why? Let me tell you something. One of the few ways the police had to go after the shooter was trying to hear the sound of where the guns were coming from.

Thank God our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have pulled back on this bill. It is not the first time. They had to postpone a hearing on the bill when the congressional baseball team was attacked during an early morning practice. When two mass shootings force you to delay a bill that would make those mass shootings harder to detect and stop, maybe it is a sign that you ought to let go of the bill once and for all.

Of course, we have this absurd NRA nostrum that if everyone were to have a gun, we would all be safe because if people were in an arena—a place—where someone was shooting, they could shoot them back. They sure could not have shot back at someone who was 32 stories up in a hotel. This idea that the only thing that can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun is absurd in this situation. It is absurd in many situations.

So where do we go from here?

This place has been gridlocked on the issue of gun control for a while. President Trump, before he ran for office, was for certain sane, rational, limited aspects of gun control. After Sandy, he called for the gun laws to be tightened. I know when he ran, that the power of

the NRA, the money of the NRA, and the narrow special interest of the NRA lobbyists here were just the swamp he decried—small groups going against the public interest and persuading Congress to do that. Yet maybe he can have a bit of a reawakening, in the horror of what happened, as he goes to Las Vegas tomorrow.

Today I am calling on the President to come out against the absurd law about silencers—to threaten a veto if he must and put an end to that bill. I am also calling on President Trump to bring together the leaders of Congress and let both sides know he is ready and willing to address head-on this issue of gun safety. He should tell Members of his party it is time to work to address this epidemic that costs the lives of more than 30,000 Americans a year.

I am glad the President is going to Las Vegas—that is a good idea—but he should take it a step further. He should call us together and lead this Nation in some rational laws about gun safety that the overwhelming majority of Americans—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—support.

If we truly want to honor our first responders and protect our fellow Americans, as we say we do, President Trump should stand up and tell the NRA that they are not always right, abandon some of their most extreme policies—I would abandon most of them—and come to the table and do the work that so many Americans are desperate for Congress to do.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. President, on another matter, the crisis in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, today, President Trump will be visiting Puerto Rico nearly 2 weeks after Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico. In my view, the lateness of his visit is indicative of his leadership and the Federal response to this humanitarian crisis. It has been slow, it hasn't been well coordinated or sure-footed, and it has been too late in coming.

President Obama visited Sandy two days after the storms hit. President Trump himself was much quicker to visit Texas when Harvey hit. Two weeks is too long. It is better than nothing. That is for sure. But it is too long. It sends a signal that maybe he believes what happened in Puerto Rico is less important than what happened in Texas or in Florida.

In the lead-up to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, President Trump was tweeting on an almost daily basis, prevailing on Texans and Floridians to stay safe from the storm. That was the right thing to do. But when it came to Puerto Rico, there were no tweets or public statements in the lead-up to the storm, and it took several days to even mention Puerto Rico in his tweets. Even then, he had mostly blame for Puerto Rico or pats on the back for his own administration. He kept decrying fake news, but he couldn't fool the American people. They saw on TV what

was happening and the devastation that stayed for so long.

Let me give a comparison. The President said that, because it is an island, it is harder to get to. It is, but when Haiti was struck by a massive earthquake in 2010, the United States didn't wait for things to get worse. We ramped up military and disaster assistance quickly and responded with an overwhelming amount of support. Within 2 days of the earthquake in Haiti, 8,000 troops were in route. Within 2 weeks, 22,000 troops were in route with 300 helicopters assisting relief efforts. Even to this moment, the number for Puerto Rico is much smaller. That shows that the response has not been good enough. Why was his response for Puerto Rico so much less than the response for Haiti?

So we need a much better response on the ground in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. I would say to President Trump, I am glad you are going—glad you are going—but this is your chance to make up for what has been a plodding start.

When the President visits Puerto Rico today, he should not get into any political fights or blame Puerto Rico for its problems. The President needs to figure out what is wrong and what else has to be done and marshal the resources of our government and our military to fix it. The 3.5 million American citizens in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are counting on their President. These are American citizens.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, returning to the Republican tax plan, over the weekend, we heard some pretty absurd claims from Republican legislators and Cabinet officials about the tax plan. The President and his top advisers are selling this as a middle-class miracle, but every independent analyst is saying that the Republican plan focuses on the rich to the exclusion of the middle class.

The GOP tax plan lowers the top rate from 39.6 to 35 percent and repeals the estate tax, which affects only the top two-tenths of 1 percent of the estates in this country, or any estate over \$11 million. That is not the middle class. It lowers the rate on passthrough entities, creating a huge loophole that would allow wealthy hedge fund managers, law firms, and lobbyists to pay a rate that is a lot lower. According to the Tax Policy Center, the top one-tenth of 1 percent would reap 80 percent of the benefits of the GOP plan. The top 0.1 percent, or folks who make more than \$5 million a year, would get a break of a million dollars a year. How many Americans believe that people who make over \$5 million a year should get a \$1 million tax break? That is what is in the bill right now.

They are saying that maybe it will change, but why did they put out such a shoddy product to begin with? Why didn't they wait and put in more details than what is there now? It is not

a middle-class tax cut by any stretch of the imagination. Those who put together this bill, the hard rightwing of the Republican Party, really aren't interested in middle-class tax cuts. They are interested in tax cuts for the rich and scraps for everyone else. Nothing makes this clearer than their budget resolution, and every day this plan comes with a surprise.

Here is the surprise today, and it is amazing. The Republican budget resolution calls for a \$450 billion cut in Medicare. Folks, this tax bill cuts your Medicare. In the budget bill that outlines the tax bill that we are doing this week, the plan calls for a \$473 billion cut in Medicare and more than \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid.

If you are an older American, you are saying: Maybe this tax bill will not affect me.

It sure will. It sure will because, amazingly, to pay for these tax cuts for the wealthiest of Americans—the most powerful of Americans—they cut your Medicare by over \$450 billion and cut Medicaid by \$1 trillion.

Haven't our Republican colleagues learned? When they tried to do a similar thing in healthcare—to cut healthcare so they could save money and cut taxes on the very wealthy—they had to abandon it. This is going to meet a similar problem. It is going to meet the opprobrium of the American people—\$1.5 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthiest of Americans—and the budget tees up even more cuts to Medicare. If the GOP tax plan were to pass, another provision known as statutory pay-go would offset the deficit increase automatically with cuts to Medicare and many other programs that support our Nation's economy. So not only does this bill favor the rich, the very wealthy, but to help finance those tax cuts for the wealthy, they are cutting Medicare by one-half trillion dollars—close to one-half trillion dollars—and they are cutting Medicaid by \$1 trillion.

So this is just like the Republicans' first healthcare bill, but in reverse. In the first TrumpCare bill, the Republicans proposed cutting back on healthcare to sneak through tax breaks for the rich. Now they are proposing massive tax cuts to the rich to sneak through cuts to healthcare.

Wait till America finds out about this bill. It is going to get the same cold, horrified reception that the healthcare bill did, and it will not pass. The American people will not be fooled. They have seen this movie before. The top 1 percent of corporations would win, and millions of seniors, the disabled, and working-class Americans would lose, and lose a lot.

The rich are doing great. They don't need a tax break. To compound the injury, to say we are going to pay for their big tax break by cutting Medicare and Medicaid, that ain't going to fly. Don't even try it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday I mentioned how our colleagues across the aisle and, of course, some groups outside of Capitol Hill have predictably started attacking tax reform, actually a plan that doesn't even yet exist in legislative language. With the fall season now upon us, they have decided to shoot arrows at a straw man.

One would think, given their effusive support for tax reform in the past, our Democratic friends would at least wait to review the legislation before they pounce on it. I had hoped that they would work with us to come up with a bipartisan plan, but I guess I am not entirely surprised. That has never stopped them before from pillorying smart policy when it served a political end.

Yes, they are already piling on, spreading misinformation, and assuming the worst because that is the easy and politically expedient thing to do. The problem is that many of the criticisms of our framework have been misleading and counterproductive. Worse, some Members seem more content to misconstrue a plan than to understand it and give it a fair hearing.

Allow me to clarify the record for just a moment. What is most striking is that the new framework unveiled by the so-called Big 6 shares many of the core features of previous plans that were widely embraced by Democrats—not only that, but many of the folks who are now critical of the new plan came out in support of these provisions as recently as this year. The senior Senator from Oregon is typical in this regard. In response to our framework, he said that “this is a far-right Republican scheme to endow future generations of the mega wealthy and leave what amounts to crumbs for the middle-class behind.” That is kind of a breathtaking allegation. Those are indeed strong statements, but the American people are smart. The American people realize that the plan our colleague from Oregon is criticizing is similar to the one he sponsored and promoted in 2011.

Let's get the facts straight. The Senator from Oregon had previously sponsored a plan in 2011 with our former colleague, Senator Coats of Indiana, called the Wyden-Coats plan. Here on the left is the Big 6 framework that he described.

Let me read that again. He said that “this is a far-right Republican scheme to endow future generations of the mega wealthy and leave what amounts to crumbs for the middle-class behind.”

Well, here is the framework he was criticizing by the language I just pro-

vided, and here is his plan in 2011. Each of these plans—the Wyden-Coats plan from 2011 and the one we are considering now—is based on three individual tax rates. Both the plan the Senator from Oregon once supported and the one we are now discussing, the framework, would collapse seven tax brackets in the current system down to three, vastly simplifying the Tax Code and the burden of complying with that Tax Code by ordinary Americans. Each plan would also eliminate the alternative minimum tax. It vastly increases the standard deduction. The Wyden-Coats plan would have tripled it. The Big 6 framework, which he criticized, doubles the standard deduction, making it so that a married couple who earn \$24,000 or less would be essentially in a zero tax bracket.

So my question is, What has changed, other than the political party of the President in office? These changes to our Tax Code used to be noncontroversial, and certainly not partisan.

The Big 6 plan isn't just similar to the Wyden one, though. It also shares key features with the so-called Simpson-Bowles plan from 2010, which not long ago was embraced by a number of Democrats, including the current minority whip, the Senator from Illinois.

Here is a comparison of the so-called Big 6 framework and the Simpson-Bowles plan. As you can see, there are a lot of similarities: seven brackets collapsed into three, eliminating the alternative minimum tax, and eliminating a number of itemized deductions or so-called base broadeners. It enhances the child tax credit, and it lowers the corporate rate.

These proposals were once a no-brainer for Republicans and Democrats alike. So why the change in tune? Our Democratic colleagues used to think these reforms were long overdue. They were right then, and they are wrong now.

None other than the Senate minority leader, our colleague from New York, has said: “To preserve our international competitiveness, it is imperative that we seek to reduce the corporate tax rate from 35 percent.” That was the Senator from New York in 2012. He said: “This will boost growth and encourage more companies to reinvest in the United States.”

He was absolutely correct in 2012. He is entirely wrong now to change his view and suggest that this is somehow a wrong way to approach getting the economy growing again and encouraging businesses that have earned money overseas to bring that money back home and invest it in businesses and jobs and pay for American workers here at home.

We do need to change incentives, and we do need to spur growth. That is why the new framework we are considering will create a new tax structure for small businesses, allowing them to better compete.

Once upon a time, none of this was particularly partisan, and many of our

colleagues across the aisle got the picture. Our colleagues from Ohio, Minnesota, and Missouri have all said in recent years that we should lower the corporate tax rate, not because we love corporations but because we recognize that provides incentives for them to stay here and invest in jobs and businesses in America rather than overseas. But it also makes it more likely that hard-working Americans will be able to find a job and that the jobs they hold will actually pay better wages. Thanks to our reduction in individual tax rates, they will actually have more take-home pay. As some have pointed out, this literally would raise their standard of living and make it possible for them to provide for their children's education, maybe buy a reliable car so that they can go back and forth to their job every day, maybe buy a home, or perhaps save for their retirement.

There is nothing partisan about wanting an updated and more competitive tax code that will incentivize businesses to keep jobs on American soil. That is what the so-called reduction in the corporate rate will do.

Right now, we have the highest corporate rate in the world, so many businesses have simply picked up their roots here in America and have moved overseas to countries that have lower tax rates because they simply can't rationalize to their shareholders, to whom they have a fiduciary duty, paying higher taxes and remaining in the United States. So they take it overseas.

Even for those who stay behind—because of our extraordinarily high tax rate and the fact they literally would have to pay double taxes for income earned abroad and brought back to the United States—they pay the tax rate in the country where the money is earned, bring it back to the United States, and have to pay twice. So they pay 35 percent on top of whatever they have to pay in the countries where the money is earned.

Is it any wonder, for example, that IBM—I read this last weekend—actually has more jobs in India than it does in the United States? Let me say that again. IBM, the global computer company, has more jobs in India today than it does in the United States. I have no doubt that has to do with certain incentives the country will pay to companies to invest and to build their business in their country, and, no doubt, it has to do with access to skilled labor. That certainly has to be a part of it, but there can be no doubt that our Tax Code is simply encouraging companies like IBM to shift more of their work overseas. Even if they wanted to bring the money they have earned overseas back to the United States, they would have to pay twice. So what do they do? They simply invest in their workforce, they simply invest in their business in another country, much to our detriment.

If something is broken, which our Tax Code is, it needs to be fixed, not

avoided. Our Democratic colleagues need to once again acknowledge this, as so many of them did when it came to our outdated Tax Code, as I pointed out. There is no reason why tax reform can't be bipartisan, and if our colleagues just returned to some of their statements, which I have highlighted here—if they returned to those policies in a bipartisan fashion and worked with us, we could change our Tax Code for the better. We could make it simpler. We could make sure individuals have lower tax rates so they could have more take-home pay from the wages they earn and, in the process, improve their standard of living for themselves and their families. Finally, we could become more competitive in a global economy where the highest tax rate in the world does not serve American interests well. It doesn't serve the interests of American businesses well, and it doesn't serve the interests of American workers or taxpayers either.

We can do this. All it takes is political will. All it takes is approaching this in a fashion that benefits all Americans on a nonpartisan basis. I hope our colleagues will listen.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, the aftermath of Las Vegas is a time for this Senator to reflect on whether a shooting is like Mateen's, in the Orlando nightclub, where he was motivated as a terrorist, and then there was the remarkable recovery of Congressman SCALISE in the attempted killing of SCALISE by a shooter who was motivated by politics, and then there is the massive massacre in Las Vegas, apparently by a shooter who was mentally deranged in some form. The fact is, massive amounts of ammunition with high-caliber, rapid-fire assault weapons is making this easier for whatever the motivation of the shooter is. As a result, you get to the point of, how many more of these do we have before you say enough is enough?

That leads to the subject of politics. When does humanity overtake the divisiveness of our politics so we can come together and have a commonsense discussion about what should be done? Because if we don't, and humanity does not overtake our politics, we will continue, and it will be more of the same.

So I ask—I yearn for that public but also private discussion with our colleagues because going down this road over and over again is not going to be the answer, and we ought to say enough is enough.

(The remarks of Mr. NELSON pertaining to the introduction of S. 1907

are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

REMEMBERING LOUIS J. AMABILI

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Lou Amabili, a true Delawarean, a fantastic, dedicated, and tireless volunteer, a gentleman who dedicated his life and service to others.

Mr. Louis J. Amabili, the son of Italian immigrants, rose from volunteering at his local volunteer fire company to become one of the most important and trusted voices in the American fire service. Lou passed away last Thursday, September 28.

Lou was a giant in the fire service community, and his decades of dedicated service are a testament to how much he cared about his calling and his neighbors. Lou was a legend in the Delaware firefighting community, especially in my small hometown of Hockessin, DE. Lou proudly served the Hockessin Fire Company for 70 years, holding every position one could possibly hold—chief engineer, first and second assistant chief, along with vice president, president, president emeritus, and director.

Lou was a humble, down-to-earth, passionate, and caring gentleman. He rarely sought the limelight, even as he was often thrust into it. He could walk into any event, whether a national convention or just a local meeting, and know an individual's name, making them feel as if they were the most important person in the room.

Lou embodied the term "public servant," which so many of us aspire to, yet he quietly and with dignity achieved this for decades. He heard his calling to serve his community, and he embraced it with dedication and a quiet passion.

There was no greater ally of firefighters in Delaware or across the country than Lou. His continued service of seven-plus decades set the highest standard of dedication to the volunteer fire service.

I first had the honor of meeting Lou around 2000 when I was county council president. Over my decade of service in New Castle County government, Lou was a frequent source of powerful advice, encouragement, insight, and occasional correction. I always looked forward to seeing him, whether at a county meeting, a State meeting, or at a national organization meeting. I was always certain I would get honest, direct, and constructive feedback from Lou about how things were going at home and how things were going nationally for America's firefighters.

Lou's nationally recognized service is long and impressive. He first gained national recognition in the fire service when President Richard Nixon appointed him to serve on the National Commission for Fire Prevention and Control in 1970—the Commission that produced the landmark report, "America Burning."

A graduate of Conrad High School and of the University of Delaware with a degree in chemistry, Lou was appointed the first director of the Delaware State Fire School in 1964 and served in that capacity for more than three decades through 1996. Upon his retirement, then-Governor TOM CARPER, my senior Senator, signed a resolution naming the Delaware State Fire School the Louis J. Amabili Fire Training Center.

From 1973 to 1980, Lou served as president of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors. From 1978 to 1986, he served as a charter member of the National Fire Academy Board of Visitors. Lou also served on the NFPA board of directors for 6 years in the 1980s and was chairman of the Fire Department Instructors Conference in 1979 and 1980.

Widely respected by his colleagues, the president of Congressional Fire Services Institute, William F. Jenaway, said:

Throughout his entire career, Lou was fully committed to the health and safety of the men and women who have served in the fire service. He was always willing and eager to share his knowledge with both aspiring and veteran firefighters and cared deeply about preserving the fire service's rich heritage. It was an honor to serve with him for many years on the CFSI Board of Directors. I valued his friendship as did my fellow board members. . . . His contributions to our organization and to the nation's fire service will preserve his legacy as a legendary leader for many years to come.

While the fire service and the safety of his fellow firefighters was his passion, his family was his love. Lou's wife of nearly 60 years, Carmella, was his constant companion as he traveled extensively to national conventions, local meetings, or speaking engagements. Lou's daughter Janice; his son Louis Junior and his wife Bridget; his grandson Louis J. Amabili III and his wife Lacie; and Lou's great-grandchildren, Lyza and Silas, will be forever proud of his legacy of service to Hockessin, to Delaware, and to our Nation.

Lou was an inspiration to generations of volunteers, first responders, and firefighters, not just in his home company in our small town of Hockessin but to all the firefighters of Delaware and our country.

Lou Amabili was exactly the sort of man on whom the safety of our Nation has been built and whose service and dedication to his community and his neighbors will never be forgotten.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Louisiana.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to talk a little bit about Social Security and, specifically, about the windfall elimination provision and the government pension offset. Now, I know that sounds real technical, but, basically, here is the problem.

We have a lot of Americans who have paid into Social Security who are now getting screwed by Social Security. They are not getting their money back. All of us want to do everything we can to maintain the stability and sanctity of the Social Security system, and I think all of us believe that we all ought to get the Social Security payments that we are entitled to. That is all this issue is about. Let me explain.

For many middle-class Americans, receiving Social Security at retirement is sort of like a welcoming light at the end of the tunnel. They have worked hard, they have retired, and now they are entitled to some of the money back that they paid into the Social Security system. I am talking, of course, about the hard-working women and the hard-working men who have seen a chunk of their monthly earnings go into the Social Security system throughout their entire careers—10, 15, 20, and sometimes 30 and 40 years. These same Americans have not seen a pay raise or an increase in their median household income for a long time. The median household income in America today, as the Presiding Officer knows, is pretty much the same as it was in 1999.

I guess whom I am talking about are ordinary people. You can call it the middle class, if you would like, or working families. They were the ones who were hit the hardest by the great recession of 2008. They have been struggling throughout their lives to participate in the great wealth of this Nation. They are entitled to participate in the great wealth of this Nation, and they should not have to keep on struggling to get money for retirement from the Social Security system when they have already paid into the Social Security system.

The principle behind Social Security is pretty simple. Throughout your working life, you pay some money and your employer pays some money. When you are done working, or when you retire, according to a formula, you get your money back through a Social Security check. It is simple in theory. You put money in, and when you hit the retirement age, you get some of it back, except that for 1.7 million Americans, that is not the case. That is not how the system works for them. That includes about 38,000 hard-working folks in my home State of Louisiana, but there are a lot more in other States as well. I am talking about millions of teachers, police officers, firefighters, and a lot of other folks who earn modest pensions in service to their communities who face little or no access to Social Security.

Here is what I am talking about. I am talking about a teacher who paid

into the Social Security system. I am talking about teachers or firefighters or policemen who paid into their own retirement systems. So they are rocking along. They are, basically, paying into two retirement systems—Social Security and the private retirement system. They are doing the right thing in getting up every day, going to work, obeying the law, and trying to save money for retirement. It is deferred gratification. They are ready to retire, but because they were prudent enough to invest in a private retirement system, they do not get their Social Security check even though they have already paid into it. Additionally, a worker can pass away before reaching retirement age not even knowing that his spouse and children will not have full access to his Social Security survivors' benefits. That is just not right.

Until 2005, there was not even a legal requirement for human resources to notify workers that switching careers would affect their eligibility for Social Security or Social Security survivors' benefits. Many of these 1.7 million Americans who are getting screwed tried to do the right thing. They paid into a private retirement system, and they paid into Social Security only to find out later that they can get their money from the private retirement system but that they cannot get their money from Social Security. They are being punished for being prudent. Many of them retire with no idea that that is the law. By then, of course, it is too late.

In June of this year, one in six Americans collected Social Security benefits, and I am happy for every one of them because, to collect, they had to pay in. That is about 61 million Americans. By 2031, when the last of the baby boomers hits retirement age, that number is going to increase to about 75 million Americans. These are going to be our seniors. They are our seniors, and they are our seniors to be. They are battling against the rising costs of housing, healthcare, automobiles, taxes, and fees. Many of them have had their private retirement accounts or home values wrecked by the great recession. Yet these Americans press on.

When we talk about tax reform—and we are going to be talking a lot about tax reform here over the next few weeks—we need to make clear that we are talking about reforms that will help these middle-class Americans. They are the people who get up every day, go to work, obey the law, and try to do the right thing by their kids and teach their kids morals and try to save a little money for retirement.

Let me be blunt. I would like to eliminate the windfall elimination provision and the government pension offset in the Social Security office. I think it would be a vital step in ensuring that our middle-class seniors can enjoy continued economic security after their retirements. Not only would it help the economy, but it is the right thing to do.

I sum up. We can provide economic relief immediately to some of those middle-class retirees about whom I have been talking by eliminating the windfall elimination provision and the government pension offset of the Social Security system. It will not cost much money. It will have a small effect on the cost of Social Security, at about 0.13 percent—not 13 percent but 0.13 percent. It is a little over one-tenth of 1 percent.

After taking care of this simple fix, which is more than about money—it is about fairness—we can turn our eyes to out-of-control Washington spending to ensure that Social Security remains a reliable source of retirement income for Americans in the long term.

Thank you.

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

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, a recent survey reported that 50 percent of people in this country consider themselves living paycheck to paycheck, and one third of these people say they are just \$400 away from financial crisis. That is not acceptable.

Unfortunately, after 8 years of economic stagnation under the Obama administration, living paycheck to paycheck is starting to feel like the new normal for most Americans. But it doesn't have to be. We have the resources to be the strongest economy in the world. American workers and job creators are as dynamic and creative as ever, and they can get our economy thriving again. In order to get them to do that, we need to clear some obstacles in their path. That starts with reforming our complicated and outdated Tax Code, which has increasingly been strangling our economy.

This month, Republicans in the House and Senate are making comprehensive tax reform one of our top priorities. After weeks of work, last week leaders from the Senate, the House, and the White House unveiled the framework that will guide our final tax reform legislation.

The framework is built around Republicans' five principles for tax reform: first, providing tax relief for the middle class; second, increasing wages, jobs, and economic growth; third, keeping good-paying jobs here at home in America; fourth, increasing American competitiveness in the global economy; and, finally, fifth, simplifying the Tax Code. The framework outlines our plans to provide relief for middle-class families.

First, we will lower rates for hard-working Americans. By collapsing the seven income tax brackets to three, we will ensure that working families get

to keep more of what they earn. Our plan will also expand the child tax credit and make it available to more families, and our plan doubles the standard deduction, which will provide significant relief for those who need it the most. Under our plan, a family making \$24,000 a year will no longer owe any Federal income taxes. All of these measures will provide direct relief to working families.

Just as important for families, however, is the other half of our tax reform plan, which involves creating the kind of economic environment where hard-working Americans can thrive—the kind of environment where Americans have access to good jobs, higher wages, and more opportunities.

Over the past few weeks, I have come to the floor to talk about Republicans' tax reform principles and have highlighted some of the ways our tax reform plan will improve the economic outlook for American families. Last week, I talked about our third principle, reforming our Tax Code to keep those good-paying jobs here at home. This week I would like to spend a few minutes talking about our fourth principle, which is keeping American businesses competitive in the global economy.

In order for individual Americans to thrive economically, we need our businesses to thrive. Thriving businesses create jobs, provide opportunities, and they increase wages and invest in workers. Right now, though, our Tax Code is not helping businesses thrive, and it is making it more difficult for American businesses with an international footprint to compete in the global economy.

Our Nation has the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world—at least 10 percentage points higher than the majority of our international competitors. It doesn't take an economist to realize that high tax rates leave businesses with less money to invest, less money to spend on wages, less money to create new jobs, less money to devote to research and development of new products and services, and less money to put back into new property or equipment for those businesses. This situation is compounded when an American business has international competitors that are paying a lot less in taxes than you are. It is no surprise that U.S. businesses struggling to stay competitive in the global economy don't have a lot of resources to devote to creating new jobs and increasing wages.

On top of our high business tax rates, there is another major problem with our Tax Code that puts American businesses at a competitive disadvantage globally—our outdated worldwide tax system.

What does it mean to have a worldwide tax system? It means that American companies pay U.S. taxes on the profit they make here at home, as well as on part of the profits they make abroad once they bring that money

back home to the United States. The problem with this is that most other major world economies have shifted from a worldwide tax system to a territorial tax system.

In a territorial tax system, taxes are paid on the money earned where it is made and only there. You are not taxed again when you bring money back to your home country. Most American companies' foreign competitors have been operating under a territorial tax system for years. So they pay a lot less taxes on the money they make abroad than American companies pay. That leaves American companies at a disadvantage.

Foreign companies can underbid American companies for new business simply because they don't have to add as much in taxes into the price of their products or services. When foreign companies beat out American companies for new business, it is not just American companies that suffer. It is American workers. That is why a key part of the tax framework that Republicans unveiled last week involves lowering our massive corporate tax rate and transitioning our tax system from a worldwide tax system into a territorial tax system. By making American businesses more competitive in the global economy, we can improve the playing field for American workers.

There are a lot of other things we are going to do to help hard-working families and American workers, from improving the tax situation for small businesses to helping family business owners, farmers, and ranchers like those in my home State of South Dakota by repealing the death tax.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle like to complain about our plans to repeal the death tax. They complain that it is not something to really worry about since they claim relatively few estates are expected to actually have to pay the tax. Well, I would like them to come and talk to some of the farmers and ranchers in my State of South Dakota. Some of these farmers and ranchers are paying tens of thousands of dollars a year in an effort to avoid having their families hit by the estate tax when they die. Why? Because they know that without careful and costly planning, if the Federal Government comes around after their death demanding a staggering 40 percent of their estate, their children won't have the money to pay the government without risking the farm or the ranch.

Farming and ranching is a land-rich but cash-poor business. Farmers and ranchers own valuable land, but they are only earning cash on the crops they grow or the livestock they raise on that land. So while their overall farm or ranch may have a substantial value, the amount of money they have coming in is relatively small and subject to the swings in the market from year to year. Too often, when farmers and ranchers die, the vast portion of their estate is made up of their land, while

actual disposable income is a very small part of it. If they don't take measures to avoid having their family hit by the death tax, the family will have no choice but to sell off some or all of their land to pay the government, which means, in many cases, losing the family's farm or ranch. And the same situation faces other types of family-owned businesses across the country where the value of the estate is tied up in that business.

Removing the threat of the death tax for family-owned businesses, farms, and ranches would free up resources that these business owners could invest in their businesses and in our economy instead of on complex estate plans, insurance, and expensive tax professionals.

Before I move on, let me just remind everybody that when we talk about the death tax, we are talking about double and sometimes triple taxation. The money the government is taxing has already been taxed at least once. It boggles the mind that some think that a person's death is justification for taxing his or her income a second or a third time. Death should not be a taxable event. When someone dies, they shouldn't have to see the undertaker and the IRS at the same time.

Our Tax Code is increasingly strangling our economy and placing heavy burdens on hard-working American families. If we want to improve the economic situation of American families, comprehensive tax reform is essential.

Republicans in the House and the Senate are continuing to work on the final draft of the bill that we will take up later this fall. I look forward to passing comprehensive tax reform that will help American families thrive, that will create greater economic growth, better paying jobs, higher wages, and bigger paychecks for American workers.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:33 p.m., recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. STRANGE).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, a tragedy took place in Las Vegas this week. It is a tragedy that has affected hundreds of families. It is a tragedy in which each and every one of us sends our prayers to those who have lost loved ones. And to those who have family members who are now hospitalized, we send our prayers to you as well, with the great hope that a full recovery is in their future.

This was an unimaginable event that occurred in our country. It is now time for us to talk about this issue. There are many people who say this is not the time to talk about it, but the truth is, the only thing the National Rifle Association wants more than to sell lots of gun silencers is to put a silencer on the debate about gun safety legislation. The only thing the NRA wants more than allowing nationwide concealed carry laws is to conceal the overwhelming support for background checks. The only thing the NRA wants more than to stifle smart gun technology is to stifle debate on gun violence prevention.

So to anyone who says having this debate now is too soon, it is already too late for at least 59 people in Las Vegas and hundreds of others who were wounded. We should not wait another day.

We need to pass commonsense gun safety legislation so that we can hold a moment of silence for the National Rifle Association's stranglehold on American politics. That is what must end in our country.

We need a debate on this floor on background checks. We need a debate in this Chamber on whether we are going to do research on the relationship between guns and violence in our society. We don't need to debate the issue of bringing silencers into our society that can be attached to guns and that would have made it infinitely more difficult for the police to find where the shooter was or for people to know that they needed to hide or move to a more secure location. That would not have happened. We would not have had 59 deaths; we could have had 259 deaths, 559 deaths, or 959 deaths because a silencer would have given less notice to all of those people that they should be moving and hiding and protecting themselves and their loved ones.

On concealed carry, the Republicans are moving a bill that allows for someone to conceal a gun under a law in one State—because that State allows you to conceal a gun, you would be able to move into any other State and continue to conceal a gun even though that State's laws prohibit concealing guns. They want that law to move through.

So when the Republicans talk about debating gun control, what they are talking about is lessening the safety around these guns, lowering the standards that would protect people, and allowing for silencers to now be proliferating on these assault weapons, these weapons of war that should not be on the streets of our country and that have the capacity to kill people without people hearing them.

They say they are needed because we need to protect people's hearing when they are firing assault weapons. Well, it is more important that the police hear the bullets and that the people who might be hit hear the sound of those bullets as they are leaving the

gun. That is going to provide far more protection. It is far more important that the police in a State or in a city know that someone has a concealed weapon. It is critically important for police protection. But the National Rifle Association does not want those kinds of protections to remain on the books. That is who they are. That is what they want.

What should we be debating? We should be debating background checks. We should be debating whether someone should be able to buy a gun on Instagram and turn it into an "instagram" without background checks. That is what we should be talking about out here.

Over 90 percent of Americans want stronger background checks. Yet the Republican leadership turns a deaf ear to the request of the American people because the National Rifle Association does not want there to be background checks on people who are buying guns in our country.

More Americans have died from gun violence in the past 50 years on the streets of America than have died in all of our Nation's wars overseas in our entire history. Let me say that again. More people have died from guns in our own country in the last 50 years than all of our soldiers, sailors, Air Force, and marines have died going all the way back to 1776. That is how much of an epidemic this is in our country. It is an epidemic that now kills 33,000 people every single year in our country, but the Federal Government's investment in researching gun violence is zero.

Diabetes—76,000 U.S. deaths annually; they get \$170 million at the Centers for Disease Control. Flu—57,000 deaths a year; they get \$187 million for research. Asthma—3,600 deaths a year; they get \$29 million for research at the Centers for Disease Control. Gun violence—zero. An epidemic is ravaging our country, and the Republicans will not fund research to find this link between violence and the use of guns in our society, to do the research that can help us to reduce this carnage on the streets of our country. And because of an appropriations rider from the 1990s, the Centers for Disease Control hasn't conducted research into the causes of gun violence and how to prevent it. If 20 young children in Newtown had died of Ebola, we would have invested funding to study it. If 59 people in Las Vegas died of Zika, would we study it? Absolutely. But our country is suffering from an illness, and we have let it spread because we refuse to write a treatment plan.

The American Medical Association supports ending the ban on research. The American Public Health Association supports ending the ban on research. More than 141 groups want to end this ban on researching the link between guns and violence in our society.

The bill I have introduced with Representative MALONEY gives \$10 million to the Centers for Disease Control

every single year. Shouldn't we be studying how to stop people from firing guns and give the medical, the scientific, and the public health community the resources they need?

We also need to develop new smart gun technologies that would improve safety and reduce accidental shootings. My bill would authorize grants to develop and personalize handgun technology to increase efficiency and decrease costs. If you can use a fingerprint to operate your iPhone, you should be able to do the same thing with your gun to make sure that safety is ensured, to make sure it is your thumbprint on that gun, that if your gun is stolen or lost, no one else would be able to use that gun. Does that make sense? Well, your thumb can work for your smartphone. Your thumb could also work for smart gun technology.

So this is where we are. We are at this critical point where some people are saying: Not now. It is inappropriate. We shouldn't be raising these issues.

But what we should be debating is what the American people want us to debate. Over 90 percent want background checks on anyone who buys a gun in our country to make sure they are qualified, to make sure they do not have something in their background that should disqualify them from owning a gun in our country.

Our debate here should really be about one thing: making the NRA stand for "not relevant anymore" in American politics. The task for the Republican Party is different. It will be whether they will kill these bills that would legalize more fully silencers being put on automatic weapons in our country, kill the concealed carry law, which is moving through the House and Senate driven by Republicans, and, instead, debate the kinds of things that make our country safer, the kinds of things that poll after poll is showing that the American people want us to do. That is going to be our challenge in the days and weeks and months ahead.

This is the time; this is the place. We are the people who must be conducting this debate to make sure we add an extra measure of safety that American families can rely upon.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, my colleague from Massachusetts has referred to the tragedy that we all watched unfold late on Sunday evening in Las Vegas, NV—the tragedy, the horror, the shock of so many. Alaska has felt the brunt of that tragedy as well. We lost two Alaskans; at least one other was injured. Mr. Adrian Murfitt from Anchorage, a commercial fisherman, lost his life that evening. Dorene Anderson, who is a mom and self-described hockey promoter, will not be returning to Alaska with her family. Rob McIntosh, who is a realtor

from the Fairbanks-North Pole area, was also injured. Our prayers are with him and with all of the families.

Whether they are from Alaska or from around the country, the tragedy, the loss, is just a shocking emotion that has been brought to this Nation. It is really horrifying on so many different levels. I express my condolences not only to the families of the Alaskans whom we have lost but to all of those who are suffering.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. President, I want to speak on another matter, and that is the tragedy related to natural disasters we have seen visited on our country, the devastating impacts that Hurricanes Irma and Maria have had on the U.S. Virgin Islands and in Puerto Rico, the current relief efforts that are underway on those islands, and how we might help in the long term to rebuild, particularly as it relates to their electric grid and their power sector.

Mr. President, as the Presiding Officer serves on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I have the honor of being the chairman of that Committee, and that is the committee of jurisdiction for our territories.

Our committee's history dates back to 1816, when it was then called the Committee on Public Lands. The acquisition of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam in 1898, through the Treaty of Paris, led to the creation of the Committee on Insular Affairs in 1899. The U.S. Virgin Islands were included in that committee's jurisdiction following their purchase from Denmark in 1917.

In 1946, the Committee on Public Lands and the Committee on Insular Affairs merged to form the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. In 1977, the committees were again reorganized, leading to the current structure of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Our committee has had the proud distinction of working with the territories for the last 70-plus years. Certainly, following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, we are committed to upholding our responsibilities to the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Perhaps it is because I was born in a territory—I need to actually look this up; it may be that I am the only Member of Congress or Member in the Senate who was actually born in a territory—but I feel an affinity. One would not think there is much connection between a small island territory like Puerto Rico and the large landmass that we have in Alaska, but in many ways, Alaska is also islanded in the sense that we are not part of the continental 48. So I do follow with great interest and care how Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are included.

With the current focus almost entirely on Puerto Rico right now, it can seem like a distant memory that only 2 weeks ago, before Hurricane Maria, we had Hurricane Irma, which hit the

islands of St. Thomas and St. John as a category 5 hurricane. One category 5 is bad enough, but then to have a second category 5 hurricane hit just 2 weeks later, this time impacting the island of St. Croix, is almost unfathomable.

The devastation we have seen in both the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico can seem overwhelming. Relief operations for the islands are different from what you have with the mainland. When you recognize how you move to accommodate relief, everything has to be brought in by ship or by plane. You don't have the convoys of trucks rolling down the highway from an adjoining State. You don't have the ability to take alternative routes to reach the affected areas. Once goods are delivered to ports, for instance, it is another challenge, then, to get them from the port for inland distribution.

Even under normal operating conditions, moving the amount of containers that have flooded into the territories would be a challenge, but when you add into it the debris, the downed power lines, the washed-out bridges and roads, the lack of power, and the driver shortages, the challenges become colossal.

Then you have other limiting factors. You have competition for hotel rooms and other lodging as you bring in relief workers to go to the islands while refugees who have lost their homes try to leave. Again, the logistics are almost overwhelming; it is a logistical nightmare.

Despite these very considerable hurdles, we do see that progress is being made. According to recent reports from the Army Corps of Engineers, Federal and local response crews have been working to reopen the ports and runways. In some cases, we have seen sunken ships that need to be removed before a port can begin operations again.

In Puerto Rico, 13 of 16 ports are open or open with restrictions. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, five of nine ports are open or open with restrictions.

In addition, 15 of 17 priority dams in Puerto Rico have already been inspected. In the case of Guajataca Dam, it is in the process of being reinforced. The dam's spillway continues to erode. Rainfall has increased the water level in the reservoir. We have seen that the debris and the downed power lines need to be removed to allow helicopters to place 44 concrete barriers within the spillway channel. In fact, 900 super sandbags are on their way. Pumps and piping are being procured to help decrease the water level. There are a lot of hands on deck there.

For electricity, as of October 1, 5 percent of customers in Puerto Rico have had their power restored. The Puerto Rico electric utility expects to have power restored to 15 percent of customers over the next 2 weeks.

I looked at this aspect of it and recognize that it is still pretty warm in Puerto Rico. I checked the weather

this afternoon, and it is 87 degrees. Over the next couple of days, it will be 93 degrees. Making sure that folks have power, have an ability to keep fans, to have air conditioning—this is critical.

Assessments show significant damage to the transmission and distribution systems, so, again, a great deal of work is yet underway there.

In the Virgin Islands, 15 percent of customers in St. Thomas and 10 percent of customers in St. Croix have had their power restored. This includes the airports and the hospitals.

On the hospitals, I would note that both the hospitals in the U.S. Virgin Islands—one in St. Thomas and one in St. Croix—have sustained heavy damage and may need to be replaced. Again, long term, moving forward, this is critical infrastructure.

We do know that in the immediate term, the primary relief that Congress can provide is through our appropriations process. We will soon be considering another tranche of disaster relief funds so that those impacted by these hurricanes have the food, water, and medicine they need as recovery efforts continue.

Other options, such as making the rum tax cover-over payments permanent and increasing or lifting the cap on community disaster loans may also need to be considered as ways to get the islands back on their feet.

Another part of our responsibility, though, is to look at potential long-term solutions to persistent problems. In the case of Puerto Rico, it is their antiquated electric grid and power generation system.

I have had many conversations with many colleagues in these past couple of weeks. I am concerned that current disaster recovery rules may mandate that the damaged or destroyed entity be restored with similar material, compared to its condition prior to the disaster. What may seem like a good, general rule of thumb in some scenarios, like this one—I don't think it makes a lot of sense. Why would we consider spending hundreds of millions of dollars to rebuild what was an inefficient, unreliable electric power grid in Puerto Rico?

Making sure that we do right going forward is important for us. I am going to be meeting with officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They have been tasked by FEMA with rebuilding Puerto Rico's electricity grid. I am going to meet with the Army Corps and the Department of Energy to see if there is a way to modernize Puerto Rico's grid during its rebuild, whether by administrative or legislative action. I think we need to look at different considerations moving forward.

There has been a discussion about whether it makes more sense to bury transmission lines rather than rebuild towers. We need to look at microgrids and consider whether they should be developed to provide power to communities throughout the island even if the

islandwide grid is down. This is something our committee has been keenly focused on—the application of microgrids and how they might be better utilized.

I would note on this matter that the urban area of Mayaguez is currently receiving power from the hydro-gas plant that is located within its municipality. It is essentially its own microgrid. But the damaged transmission lines prevent electricity from moving to other municipalities across the island.

There are other considerations, including the role that distributed generation plays. Can these Federal entities work with the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, PREPA, to develop a demonstration project for the island that would make the grid more efficient, more reliable, reduce the cost of electricity to consumers? These are all things that need to be considered. We had a hearing in the Energy Committee this morning on energy storage technologies, and it was mentioned there that regional technology demonstrations might be particularly helpful for Puerto Rico at this time.

I intend to visit Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands with other Members a few weeks from now. We know President Trump is there today. We are going to wait until the situation has stabilized just a bit more to allow for these relief efforts to continue. When we have an opportunity to observe the situation ourselves, I think it is worth noting that we will, on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, be holding a hearing on the impacts of Hurricanes Irma and Maria on both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and I anticipate we will be doing that in the coming weeks. We want to look at not only the damage caused and where recovery efforts stand but also lessons learned as well as opportunities moving forward as to how we can rebuild Puerto Rico's electric grid to better than it was before so it does have a resiliency and it does have a sustainability that I think is imperative moving forward.

We recognize that the islands have faced a real tragedy in this natural disaster, but, from this, can we work quickly to stabilize things in the short term but allow this to be an opportunity to think about Puerto Rico's long-term energy future—an energy future that is more resilient and is more sustainable.

So our thoughts and prayers are with all who were impacted by these incredibly powerful storms as they dig out, as they rebuild, as they restart their lives, and just as we will take care of the people of Texas and Louisiana and Florida, I want to make sure the people of Puerto Rico and the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands know we stand united with them during these exceptionally difficult times and that we will work with them as partners to make their islands stronger, more resilient, and better prepared for whatever the future may bring them.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I would like to start by thanking Senator MURKOWSKI for her leadership as chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, on which I also serve, in addressing some of the long-term needs of Puerto Rico.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, the American people are relieved that the latest version of TrumpCare went down in defeat last week. We won this battle because millions of people made their voices heard, but the danger remains. We cannot grow complacent.

The President and his allies in Congress are hoping that in our relief, we will move on and pay attention to other things. With this President, I have to say, and this administration, there is always a fresh outrage to contend with. After his latest failure, the President has turned to sabotage and neglect to accomplish his goal of denying millions of people access to healthcare under the Affordable Care Act.

The danger is real. The President's continued threats to eliminate cost-sharing reduction payments that help reduce out-of-pocket costs for consumers under the ACA, for example, are already destabilizing health insurance in Hawaii and across the country.

This year, HMSA and Kaiser—two of Hawaii's largest providers of health insurance—proposed large rate increases for customers on the exchange in response to the uncertainty posed by the President's threats to eliminate the cost-sharing payments. These companies have been told to submit two rate proposals, one if cost-sharing remains in place and the other if these cost-sharing provisions are eliminated.

If the President eliminates cost-sharing payments, Hawaii residents could see an 8-percent increase in their premiums on the individual markets. This translates into millions of dollars more that Hawaii residents will need to pay. This is irresponsible, unacceptable, and completely within the President's power to prevent.

Unfortunately, the President isn't the only member of his administration intent on sabotaging the Affordable Care Act. The Secretary of Health and Human Services resigned in disgrace last week, but the work he set in motion at the Department to make it more difficult for people to sign up for insurance continues apace.

The administration has already shortened the open enrollment period from 90 days to 45 days and proposed massive cuts for advertising and call centers during this shortened window. To make matters worse, they are taking healthcare.gov down for so-called maintenance at peak times on the weekends so people have even less time to sign up for coverage.

The sabotage doesn't end there. The administration is also calling for a 40-

percent cut in funding for navigators who help vulnerable communities find and secure coverage. In the past, organizations in Hawaii like We Are Oceania and the Legal Aid Society have received navigator grants to help enroll low-income Hawaii residents, COFA citizens, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved communities in programs under the ACA.

Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with Josie Howard, We Are Oceania's program director. Josie and her team navigate a multitude of language and cultural barriers to help COFA citizens who have been unfairly disqualified from Medicaid to enroll in the exchange. President Trump's determination to sabotage the ACA undermines the hard work Josie and organizations like We Are Oceania are doing to expand healthcare access to underserved communities.

We need to keep fighting back against the President's sabotage campaign, but we can also work together in Congress to improve our Nation's healthcare system and renew programs that millions of people depend on every year in our country.

On Saturday, Congress allowed funding for the Community Health Center Fund—CHCF—to lapse without being renewed. CHCs across the country will be forced to lay off staff, reduce hours of operations, scale back investments, or even close, denying healthcare coverage or services to millions of people in need all across the country.

Through the ACA, the CHCF provided increased funding for community health centers across the country to modernize facilities, hire new staff, and expand services in underrepresented communities. If Congress does not renew the program, community health centers will face a 70-percent cut in their Federal funding, and this will have a devastating impact for community health centers in Hawaii, like Malama I Ke Ola in Wailuku on Maui.

Thanks to the CHCF funding and the ACA's Medicaid expansion, Malama I Ke Ola has been able to expand the services it provides to Maui residents and improve outcomes for thousands of people—particularly in the area of women's health.

In the years following the passage and implementation of the ACA, Malama I Ke Ola has worked to expand OB-GYN services at the clinic. With increased funding, the clinic has purchased new, high-definition ultrasound machines, hired new physicians, and upgraded its prenatal care facilities. The center recently signed a new contract with the University of Hawaii to provide overnight fetal medical services at the clinic instead of having to refer patients to large public hospitals on Oahu. Keeping these patients on Maui not only reduces overall healthcare spending but also allows patients to stay close to home and their families.

If Congress does not renew CHCF funding, this program—and hundreds of

others across the State and country—will be at risk.

Congressional inaction has also threatened the future of the Children's Health Insurance Program—or CHIP—which provides health insurance to 9 million low-income children and mothers across the country and 27,000 in Hawaii. We should act as soon as possible to pass a bipartisan reauthorization that Senators HATCH and WYDEN negotiated in the Senate Finance Committee.

It seems as though every day the President tweets something new and outrageous to distract us from the true issues facing our country, whether it is the Mueller investigation or his decision to rescind DACA and place hundreds of thousands of DACA Dreamers at risk for deportation. This is a tactic the President has used to great effect during our many debates on healthcare. The President hopes we will be paying more attention to his attacks on NFL players or demeaning comments about the mayor of San Juan instead of his dangerous proposals to take healthcare away from millions of people in our country. We have to keep paying attention and keep our eyes on the ball. We have to keep speaking up and fighting back.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, after failing to throw 32 million Americans off of the health insurance they currently have last week, the Republicans are continuing their attack against the working families of our country with one of the most destructive budgets in American history.

I know the American people today, for very good reason, are preoccupied with the horror of what happened in Las Vegas, and people are horrified about what has happened in Puerto Rico, but I would beg of the American people to please pay attention to the budget proposal and the so-called tax reform ideas brought by the Republican leadership in the Senate, as well as in the House.

This proposal would cause devastating economic pain for tens of millions of Americans by, on the one hand, giving incredibly large tax breaks for the wealthiest people in the country, while at the same time making it harder for our children to get a decent education, harder for the families of this country to get the healthcare they need, harder for families, literally, to put food on the table, harder to protect our environment, and harder for the elderly to live their retirement years with dignity.

This is the Robin Hood proposal in reverse. The Robin Hood principle in reverse is that instead of taking from the rich to help the poor, this proposal makes massive cuts in programs desperately needed by the middle class and working families of our country, precisely to give unbelievably large tax breaks to the people on top—the people who least need those tax breaks.

At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, where we have more inequality today than at any time since the 1920s and more inequality than almost any major country on Earth, where the very, very rich are becoming much richer and we have 40 million people living in poverty and tens of millions of middle-class families are going nowhere in a hurry, this Republican budget, according to the Tax Policy Center, at the end of 10 years, would provide 80 percent of the tax benefits to the top 1 percent.

Right now, today, the rich are doing phenomenally well. Everybody understands that. The middle class is shrinking. But according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center, by the end of the decade, nearly 80 percent of the tax benefits in the Republican plan would go to the top 1 percent—under this plan, this Republican plan. The top one-tenth of 1 percent, the richest of the rich, would receive a tax break of over \$1 million a year.

At a time when so many of our families are struggling to put food on the table, struggling to figure out how to send their kids to college, struggling to figure out how to pay for childcare, we have a Republican tax proposal that would provide trillions of dollars in tax breaks to the richest people in this country.

This is a budget that would increase the Federal deficit by \$1.5 trillion over the next decade. We have heard on the Senate floor my Republican friends talking about how worried they are about the \$20 trillion national debt and how high the deficits are. This proposal, designed to give tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country, would increase the Federal deficit by \$1.5 trillion over the next decade, and, by the way, this is a conservative estimate. There are those who think the deficit would go up a lot more than that.

This is a Republican proposal that eliminates the estate tax. What is the estate tax? Republicans name it the “death tax,” but let us be clear about what this tax is and who benefits from it. Despite Republican efforts trying to find farmers or ranchers who would benefit from it, this is not legislation designed to help farmers or ranchers. This is legislation designed to help the top two-tenths of 1 percent. So 99.8 percent of the American people will not benefit one nickel from the repeal of the estate tax. Only the wealthiest of the wealthy will benefit. If this Republican proposal to repeal the estate tax would go through, the Walton family of Walmart, the wealthiest family in

America, would receive a tax cut of up to \$52 billion.

Does anybody for one second think that, at a time when so many of our people are struggling and when we have a \$20 trillion national debt, we should be passing legislation that gives the wealthiest family in this country up to a \$52 billion tax break by repealing the estate tax?

But it is not just the Walton family, of course. This is a budget that says that if you are the second wealthiest family in America, the Koch brothers—and this, by the way, is just coincidental, no doubt. I know it is amazing how these coincidences take place. The Koch brothers are a family who contributed hundreds of millions of dollars year after year to the Republican Party to elect candidates who represent the wealthy and powerful. Just coincidentally, that family would receive a tax break of up to \$38 billion.

People ask why the Koch brothers are contributing hundreds of millions of dollars every campaign cycle. That is a huge amount of money. That is a huge amount of money for normal families, but when you are the second wealthiest family and you have a tax break of \$38 billion, contributing a few million dollars every campaign cycle is pocket change and is a good investment.

This is a budget that will cut Medicare by \$450 billion. Right now in this country, we have millions and millions of seniors who are struggling to make ends meet. They can't afford their prescription drugs. They can't afford to keep their homes warm in the winter-time. Yet this Republican budget would cut Medicare by \$450 billion.

Now, the Republicans tried, time after time, despite massive opposition from the American people, to repeal the Affordable Care Act. In every one of their pieces of legislation, they made devastating cuts in Medicaid. Well, they are back again. Ostensibly, this is not a healthcare piece of legislation. It is a budget. It is so-called tax reform. There is \$1 trillion of cuts in the Medicaid Program. So if you were worried last week, 2 weeks ago, and 1 month ago about what the terrific Republican healthcare bills would do, stay worried because this bill will cut \$1 trillion over 10 years in Medicaid, resulting in at least 15 million Americans losing their health insurance.

Can you imagine a set of priorities that says that we are going to throw 15 million people off of health insurance in order to give tens of billions of dollars in tax breaks to the wealthiest families in this country? Unbelievable.

It really is unbelievable.

This proposal not only adds to the deficit, not only makes massive cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, it also impacts the American people in many ways. We have a program in this country called the Women, Infants, and Children Program, and at a time when the United States has the highest rate of infant mortality of any major country on

Earth, what we do to try to deal with that issue is provide help to low-income pregnant women and their babies after the babies are born. This Republican budget would make about \$6.5 billion in cuts to the WIC Program, eliminating nutrition assistance to over 1.2 million pregnant women, new moms, babies, and toddlers in Vermont and all over this country.

Here are the priorities: Tax breaks for the Walton family, for the Koch brothers' families, who are billionaires, and cuts in programs for low-income, pregnant women who want to have healthy babies.

At a time when the cost of childcare has skyrocketed all over this country—in the State of Vermont, it is a very serious problem; families cannot find affordable childcare—the Republican budget eliminates Head Start services for 25,000 children each and every year by cutting this program by about \$3 billion. In total, the Republican budget would cut more than \$5 trillion from education, healthcare, affordable housing, childcare, transportation, and other programs the working families of this country desperately rely upon.

Let's be clear about something else. This is not me talking; Republican economists are saying the same thing.

What is the theory underlying this whole approach of giving tax breaks to billionaires? The theory is that when you give tax breaks to billionaires and large, multinational corporations, somehow or another, they are going to start using the new revenue they acquire to invest in the economy and create decent-paying jobs. This is the so-called trickle-down economic theory, and this is a theory that Senate Republicans and President Trump have embraced with this budget.

The fact is that anyone who looks at history understands that whole theory is a fraud. It has always been an abysmal failure. Since Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush slashed taxes on the wealthy and deregulated Wall Street, trillions of dollars in wealth have been redistributed from the middle class and working families to a handful of millionaires and billionaires. That is what trickle-down economics results in—a transfer of wealth from the middle class to the people on top—and that is exactly what this Republican proposal will do.

Today we have more wealth inequality than at any time since the 1920s. Unbelievably, the top one-tenth of 1 percent now owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. This budget would make a very bad situation worse, and it would increase the level of wealth inequality in America today.

As the ranking member of the Budget Committee, I intend to do everything I can to oppose this absurd set of priorities, and when I do that, I am speaking for the vast majority of the American people. Poll after poll after poll tells us that the American people do not think billionaires need more tax

breaks. Poll after poll after poll tells us that the American people do not agree with the Republican leadership when they want to throw millions of people off of the health insurance they have. This is not a budget for the American people. This is not a budget for economic growth. This is a budget paid for and fought for by the Koch brothers and a handful of billionaires who will gain very handsomely if this budget were to be passed.

I would remind my Republican colleagues—and this is not a very radical idea—that we were elected to the Senate not just to represent a handful of billionaires; we were elected to the Senate to do our best for the middle class and working families of our country. This should not be legislation designed as payback for hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign contributions. We need to pass legislation that protects the interests of working families and the middle class and lower income people.

Thank you, Mr. President.

(Mr. STRANGE assumed the Chair.)

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

REMEMBERING PETE DOMENICI

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I am joined today by my colleague from New Mexico, Senator HEINRICH. We thought we would come to the floor together and talk about Senator Domenici, our former colleague who passed away recently.

Pietro Vichi Domenici was born to Italian immigrants in Albuquerque, NM, in 1932. He was a grocer's son. He worked in his parents' store and attended Catholic school. He graduated from our own University of New Mexico. He pitched in college on the Albuquerque Dukes' farm team, and he taught high school mathematics. He went to law school and built a law practice. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1973 and became New Mexico's longest serving Senator.

He was a husband, father, and grandfather. He married Nancy Burke right out of law school, and his beautiful wife of 59 years was key to his long and successful career. She is a good friend of ours, and we spent an hour with her in Albuquerque a little over a week ago. She is still very strong, and she is still very focused, as one would expect as a mother and grandmother of her children and grandchildren.

Pete Domenici was a statesman. He worked across party lines to find pragmatic solutions for the American people. New Mexicans will always remember him as one of the strongest fighters our State will ever know.

Senator Domenici and I belonged to different political parties, and we didn't always agree on things, but I always appreciated that he cared deeply about the issues, and he put the Nation and New Mexico's interests first as he

saw them. I join all of New Mexico in thanking him and in mourning his passing.

Senator Domenici's math skills and his beginnings in local government served him well during his 36 years in the U.S. Senate. Anyone who has served in city government knows the importance of a budget. Sitting as chair or ranking member on the Senate Budget Committee for 22 years, he held the Federal Government to the same rigorous, logical standard. He mastered the complexities of the Federal budget and served longer in a leadership position on that committee than any other Senator. He was a budget deficit hawk and a realist. He understood that supply-side economics do not work and that big tax cuts will not result in growth leading to a balanced budget. He went up against his own party, and he went up against President Ronald Reagan on the same budget issue.

In the 1990s, he worked with President Clinton to produce a budget surplus for fiscal year 1998—the first surplus in our budget since 1969. His willingness to work with Democrats, his pragmatism, and his stature with his own party made it possible.

On the Budget Committee, he understood how to align New Mexico and national interests.

He recognized the potential of our National Labs—Los Alamos and Sandia—and the potential they had for our State. He understood their importance to the national interest. He championed their work for decades. Our Labs provide thousands of good jobs in central and northern New Mexico, and the breadth and depth of their research and scientific contributions to our Nation are nothing short of astonishing. Pete Domenici played a critical role in the Labs' developments.

He also had a key appreciation of the importance to New Mexico and the Nation of our military bases. In 2005, Cannon Air Force Base in southern New Mexico was slated to close. This would have cost New Mexico lots of jobs and would have had a devastating impact on the overall economy of the State. Senator Domenici, along with the entire delegation and Governor Richardson, worked to secure a different and critical mission for Cannon Air Force Base. Today, the 27th Special Operations Wing is going strong at Cannon. Six thousand men and women are employed, and rural Roosevelt and Curry Counties benefit from the base's \$500 million economic impact.

Senator Domenici's fingerprints are not only all over the Budget Committee but are all over the Energy and Natural Resources Committee—which he chaired for 4 years in the early 2000s—and the Indian Affairs Committee, which I am fortunate to sit on today. He helped position the United States to be energy independent through the Energy Policy Acts of 2005 and 2007—the last time we really had bipartisan energy acts. He was a strong advocate on behalf of Tribes, working

to advance Indian healthcare and resolve longstanding water rights disputes, protecting Native art from counterfeiting, and improving reservation roads.

My Uncle Mo talked a lot about the importance of being able to disagree without being disagreeable and to work together, if possible. Senator Domenici understood that while the delegation was divided by party, it was united in its love for New Mexico. He knew that New Mexico would be stronger if everyone worked together. It is partly thanks to him that our delegation continues a tradition of working together regardless of party.

Senator Domenici's commitment to bipartisanship did not end in 2009 with his Senate tenure; he continued to try to find solutions that worked for everyone as a senior fellow at the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington.

The Pete V. Domenici Institute for Public Policy at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces carries on his tradition through scholarship. The Senator said:

It's time for us to join together and take these [partisan] issues out of politics. The problems we face are so big, people from both sides need to sit down and say, "We can't approach this the normal way." Some great leadership is needed.

We could really use that commitment to bipartisanship in the Senate halls today.

Senator Domenici was in Washington for many years, but he never was out of touch with everyday New Mexicans. Whether it was the acequia repairs in the Espanola Valley, creating a port of entry at Santa Teresa, funding new fighter jets at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, establishing the Petroglyph National Monument, protecting Valles Caldera, forming the Hispanic Cultural Center and Museum in Albuquerque, Pete Domenici identified New Mexico's needs and came up with solutions.

Pete and Nancy had a special passion for people who live with mental illness, borne from his own family's experience. This is an issue that he and I talked a lot about and that our two families shared. He worked across the aisle for many years to achieve parity in insurance coverage between mental healthcare and medical services. Any family who experiences serious mental illness understands that the two should be treated the same and that adequate mental healthcare is absolutely necessary.

In 2008, Congress passed the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. That Federal law means that millions of persons with mental illness and substance abuse disorders have better access to the care they really need.

Senator Domenici spoke passionately and personally about mental health. He also did so on immigration. His mother originally immigrated to the United States illegally. During World War II, she was taken in a raid aimed at

"Italian sympathizers." Those of us who were here during the immigration debates in 2006 remember his plainspoken and moving speech on the floor of the Senate, where he said:

I understand this whole idea of a household with a father who is American and a mother who is not, but they are living, working, and getting ahead. I understand that they are just like every other family in America. There is nothing different. They have the same love, same hope, same will and same aspirations as those of us who were born here have.

I couldn't agree more.

Pete Domenici, my good friend, son of Italian immigrant grocers, a great Senator, a great American, and a great New Mexican, thank you for your remarkable contributions. You leave an exceptional legacy for New Mexico and for the Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I am really proud to come to the floor today to join my fellow Senator from New Mexico, TOM UDALL, to recognize the life and service of the longest serving Senator from our incredible State of New Mexico, Senator Pete Domenici.

Senator Domenici dedicated his entire life to the State and to the people he loved. He served our State in the Senate for 36 years. His decades of service to New Mexico left a lasting impact that will continue to be felt in every corner of our State for many years to come. Many in New Mexico called him Saint Pete because of how relentlessly he fought on the Appropriations and Budget Committees to secure resources for the people of New Mexico. We can still see the fruits of his labors at our State's National Labs, at our military installations, at our colleges and universities, and in water systems and community centers all over our State. That is because, while he worked on the forefront of major policy debates here in the Senate, Pete Domenici always put the interests of New Mexico above all else.

Like myself, Senator Domenici's first public service experience came on Albuquerque's City Council, then called the City Commission. And, at least in my experience, I know that working at that local level was an invaluable way to learn how to hear from diverse viewpoints and stakeholders and find ways to build consensus and get the results for your constituents that you hope to achieve. I have tried to bring that approach with me into the Senate, and I know that Senator Domenici was, in part, so successful because of the skills he learned there.

I am grateful for the example Senator Domenici set for all of us here in this body on how to advance important and complex policy goals in Washington with civility for our colleagues.

Republicans and Democrats alike who worked with him on issues like the budget, energy, national defense, nuclear deterrence, and mental health parity still point to his dedication to bipartisan cooperation and compromise.

Although they didn't always see eye to eye, Senator Domenici, a Republican, and Senator Jeff Bingaman, a Democrat, who served New Mexico alongside him for the vast majority of his time in the Senate, always made a point of improving the lives of New Mexicans by working together. It set a great example for people like me to watch how the two of them worked together. Their spirit of cooperation across party lines is still present in our State's congressional delegation, and I believe Senator Domenici's focus on putting policy results above party politics still resonates today.

One of the greatest examples of this was Senator Domenici's work alongside two progressive Democratic lions of the Senate—Paul Wellstone and Ted Kennedy—to pass mental health parity legislation. Senators Domenici and Wellstone didn't agree on many issues, but they found they both had close, personal experience with and a passion for mental health parity. Both Senators had close family members who had experienced the great challenges of finding a way to pay for mental health treatment. Insurance companies were not required to cover mental health and addiction treatment in those days in the same way they covered treatment for so many other illnesses and diseases. Because of that, most insurance companies simply didn't cover these essential services at all.

Starting in the mid-1990s, Senators Domenici and Wellstone worked together with mental health advocates to advance legislation to finally change that.

After Senator Wellstone was killed in a tragic plane crash, Senator Domenici kept up the fight for 6 more years with a new partner in Senator KENNEDY. The Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act was finally passed in October of 2008, only a few months before Senator Domenici's retirement from the Senate.

That is the type of bipartisanship, legacy, and statesmanship on behalf of the American people that I hope we will all remember for a long, long time to come. We should all try better to keep that spirit alive in the Senate today.

I join all New Mexicans and all Americans in mourning the passing of Senator Pete Domenici. Our thoughts, our deepest condolences, and our prayers are with his wife Nancy and all of his family and loved ones at this time of great loss, for their family and for the State. I am certain that Senator Domenici's legacy will not be forgotten in New Mexico and will not be forgotten in the U.S. Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

THE BUDGET AND TAX REFORM

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we need tax reform that helps small businesses close these tax loopholes that are taking jobs overseas. Instead, we need to create those jobs at home. We need tax reform that puts money in the pockets of middle-class families in Michigan and all across the country, and we need an American budget that shows what we value as Americans.

Too often, we think of budgets as sterile numbers on a spreadsheet. In reality, budgets are about people. They are about the middle-class Cass City parents who are sitting down to do their taxes and feeling as if it is they, not the wealthiest 1 percent, who are carrying the heaviest burden. They are about helping small business owners in Pontiac, MI, family farmers in Cadillac, and Michigan companies that are creating good-paying jobs. They are also about ensuring that the most vulnerable among us—our children, senior citizens, people with disabilities—are valued and protected.

We cannot consider a budget without considering people. Will it help middle-class families thrive? Will it help small business owners grow? Will it help protect people who cannot protect themselves? Unfortunately, the Republican budget and tax plan suggest that we do not value people, plain and simple.

There are 47 million Americans who depend on Medicare—seniors and people with disabilities. Yet the budget resolution we will be considering tomorrow in the Budget Committee will cut \$473 billion from Medicare. For the low-income children, parents, seniors in nursing homes, and people with disabilities who depend on Medicaid, in that budget resolution, Medicaid would be cut by \$1 trillion.

We just went through this debate twice in efforts to gut healthcare, to gut Medicaid, which would take away healthcare from tens of millions of people. The American people said no, and the Senate said no—twice. Yet we are right back again. Here they go again on the budget resolution, putting forward huge—even bigger—cuts in Medicaid. This time, it is not just Medicaid, it is Medicare, which was not in the last two proposals that we rejected, because they hurt too many people by taking away their healthcare.

Now we have a budget resolution that will be coming to the floor of the Senate. I am assuming they will have enough votes. They certainly will not have mine or those of my Democratic colleagues, but if every Republican in committee votes for it, we will have on the floor a budget resolution that will cut Medicare by \$473 billion and Medicaid by \$1 trillion.

Why is that being done? It is being done to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest among us. In fact, 80 percent of the tax cuts would go to the top 1 percent. It would be 80 percent who would receive a cut of about \$200,000 a year—a cut. The majority of people in Michigan do not make \$200,000 a year,

but this would be a tax cut of \$200,000 a year, on average. This is not what I was talking about before in our helping small businesses and middle-class families and closing tax loopholes that are taking jobs overseas. This is a straight-up, trickle-down tax cut that has not worked before in creating jobs. It creates a lot of deficits but not jobs, and people in my State are still waiting for it to trickle down to them.

Republicans are asking seniors, people with disabilities, children, and families to give up healthcare in order to fund a huge tax cut for the richest 1 percent, which will cost more than \$2 trillion. To me, that sounds like backwards budgeting for sure.

I do not often quote my friend from Kentucky, but Senator PAUL was absolutely right yesterday. He tweeted this:

This is a GOP tax plan? Possibly 30 percent of middle-class families get a tax hike? I hope the final details are better than this.

I do too. I hope that the final details are a lot better than this if it is going to be something that the people of Michigan will support and benefit from.

Under the Republican plan, a senior citizen in Saginaw, MI, who is making \$20,000 a year would get a tax increase; a married couple with two kids and an income of \$70,000 in Gaylord, MI, would get a tax increase; and a single mom with three kids in Battle Creek, MI, who works really hard every day in juggling and caring for her kids and who earns \$50,000 a year, which never seems to stretch far enough, would actually pay \$1,000 more in taxes because, under the plan, if you have more than one child, you will actually see your taxes go up because the personal exemption for each child will be taken away.

Senator PAUL is right. This is just plain wrong. I do have to give Republicans credit, though. They keep upping the ante. It wasn't even a week ago when they were trying to take healthcare away from people in Michigan and across the country with a plan that would increase costs and reduce healthcare. Now they are trying to take healthcare away from people who need it most by raising taxes on middle-income families and cutting Medicare, as well as Medicaid.

We do need tax reform. I would like very much to see the code simplified, but any tax proposal needs to meet three basic requirements to get my support. First, tax reform needs to be bipartisan, rather than coming up with this proposal in the budget resolution which, once again, just like healthcare, would be jamming something through on a partisan vote. It needs to be bipartisan. It needs to be thoughtful.

Those of us on the Finance Committee are thoughtful people. We worked for 2 years in bipartisan working groups on each section of the Tax Code, getting ready to have a thoughtful discussion and negotiation on real tax reform that would help small businesses grow—by the way, they are cre-

ating a majority of the new jobs—as well as making sure families in America who are struggling would be able to have a simplified Tax Code and a tax cut. So I am all for doing a bipartisan approach, but that is not what is happening here. That is not what will be put into the budget resolution tomorrow, and, unfortunately, it doesn't appear that it is what is going to happen in the Finance Committee.

The other reason for wanting to do this in a bipartisan way is that it is the only way to make sure it is permanent. If you use these truncated processes of reconciliation to try to jam something through, it is not permanent. I know from businesses in Michigan, large and small, as well as families, that to be able to plan, they want to see some permanent changes, and doing it this way is not permanent.

Second, tax reform needs to help businesses create jobs right here at home. Over the last year, I visited more than 120 small businesses in Michigan, and I have seen for myself how they are driving my State's economy. I also know how challenging it can be for them to navigate the complex Tax Code. The owner of a small business shouldn't have to spend hours with an accountant instead of with her customers. We can fix that. At the same time, tax reform needs to preserve important incentives for manufacturers that are creating jobs here in Michigan and in our country.

I don't believe we have an economy unless somebody makes something or somebody grows something. We need to make sure that the tax policy that supports capital intensive companies remains intact, and we need to close the gigantic loopholes that incentivize our jobs going overseas.

I have one simple proposal. It is not everything, but it is a symbol of how bad the situation is. I have been trying to get it passed now for over 10 years here, and it keeps getting blocked and filibustered. It is called the Bring Jobs Home Act. It is very simple. The Tax Code right now allows a company moving overseas to write off all their moving costs. So the workers losing their jobs help pay for the move through their taxes. The community pays for the move through their taxes. It makes no sense to do that. My Bring Jobs Home Act would stop that and say that you don't get to write off the costs when you are leaving our country. However, if you want to come back, if you want to bring jobs home, we are happy to let you write off those costs, and we will give you an extra 20 percent tax credit to bring those jobs home. If you want to leave, you are on your own. That is what our Tax Code should say to businesses that are moving our jobs overseas.

The third important measure in tax reform is that it needs to put money in the pockets of hard-working families. Michigan families are working hard every day to make ends meet. For too long, working-class and middle-class

families have watched as all of the benefits seem to flow to the wealthiest among us over and over and over. Middle-class families are stretched to the breaking point, and it is time they get a break.

That is what the President originally said. This was going to be a middle-class tax cut. Yet, when we run the numbers, it is just not true. For too many, they are going to see a tax increase. As I said before, 80 percent of the Republican tax cuts go to the top 1 percent. You can even break that down more with 0.1 percent, and it is shocking that those individuals are going to get a million-dollar tax cut.

When you look at the majority of people in Michigan who work hard every day and don't earn \$200,000 or more, and you look at the fact that there would be a tax plan brought forward that would actually give a tax cut of \$200,000 a year, and someone with three children or four children would actually see their taxes go up—wait a minute—what is wrong with that picture?

Unfortunately, this budget and tax proposal falls short in a number of ways, beyond Medicare and Medicaid cuts and what is happening in terms of families. As I said before, it is far from bipartisan. As with healthcare, Democrats have been locked out of the process. Republicans have been meeting in secret—no Democrats allowed.

The Republicans are having to use this reconciliation process to force something that will not be permanent. There is little reason to believe that this will help American workers. As I indicated before, it will not close loopholes that are taking jobs overseas.

It doesn't benefit hard-working people and working families that are working really hard to make it every year, every week. It does not benefit them.

The Republican budget and tax proposal targets the most vulnerable. It isn't bipartisan. It will not stop offshoring. It will not benefit the middle class. There is one thing that it will do. There is one thing that those who analyze this agree upon. It will explode the deficit. The independent analysis shows that these proposals would increase the deficit by \$2.4 trillion. So there is \$2.4 trillion in lost revenues that would go to increasing the deficit.

Our friends across the aisle scoff at that. These tax cuts, they say, will pay for themselves. Although in our Finance Committee hearing today, when we asked both the Republican and Democratic experts who were testifying, no one said it would pay for the tax cuts—no one.

President Trump said this huge tax cut will be rocket fuel for our economy. But when you look at the 2001 tax cuts, there was no rocket fuel there. In the 2003 tax cuts, there was no rocket fuel there. In 2012, the State of Kansas had tax cuts that almost caused them to have to go to a 4-day school week for children because of the huge deficits. There was no rocket fuel there.

There are two things to remember about rocket fuel. It is unstable, and, if you are not careful, you will get badly burned.

Budgets aren't about numbers; they are about people. They are about middle-class parents wondering why the wealthiest get all the breaks and they get the bill. It is about a small business owner wondering why she can't run a bakery without hiring an accountant. It is about seniors on disability wondering if Medicare and Medicaid will be there for them while they watch the 0.1 percent get tax breaks and there are future generations being stuck with the bill for tax cuts that will not pay for themselves.

Budgets are about people, and this budget fails them. It is time to work together across the aisle to do what is right, to make sure that the budget and tax proposals work for everybody, not just a privileged few, and that they help companies create jobs here at home and focus on policies to benefit our working families.

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

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

UNITED STATES V. SANCHEZ-GOMEZ

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, last week I filed an amicus brief calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to hear and then overturn the ruling of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in *United States v. Sanchez-Gomez*. I am proud to have been supported in this effort by all 15 sheriffs in my home State of Arizona, as well as the Western States Sheriffs Association and the National Sheriffs' Association.

I should mention that this is not a partisan issue we are talking about. We have sheriffs representing both parties in Arizona. Every sheriff in Arizona has supported this amicus—all 15.

This decision by the Ninth Circuit is just another example of a ruling that is well outside of the judicial mainstream. Unfortunately, in this case, their ruling dramatically undercuts effective border enforcement, and it creates a dangerous situation for law enforcement and the public. In this case, the Ninth Circuit ruled that it violates the rights of prisoners for marshals and other sheriffs or other courtroom personnel to employ commonplace, thoughtfully crafted courtroom safety policies in which prisoners appear before a judge, fitted with appropriate restraints. This is a significant change from common practice, and it conflicts with two other courts of appeals.

More troubling, the decision has prompted public safety concerns for Arizona and throughout the West. First, law enforcement will have no

choice but to increase the number of officers needed to maintain the safety of individuals inside courtrooms. This means that more U.S. marshals and sheriffs will be spending their days in courthouses instead of pursuing violent fugitives or preventing street crime. Even with these increased numbers, law enforcement officials have expressed concern over the high threshold they are now forced to attain in order to get permission to fit dangerous prisoners with restraints.

By putting these restraints on law enforcement rather than prisoners, this ruling limits the ability of sheriffs and U.S. marshals to ensure the safety of the judges, jurors, lawyers, prisoners, victims, and members of the public inside these courthouses around the country.

This decision also dramatically undercuts the ability of the Federal courts to process illegal immigration border crossing cases as part of Operation Streamline, the very successful border enforcement program that has worked so well in some parts of Arizona. By establishing a zero tolerance approach to illegal border crossings, Operation Streamline has made a dramatic difference in the number of illegal border crossings in communities like Tucson and Yuma.

This year, the Operation Streamline Program averaged around 45 individuals per hearing. Even with these high caseloads, the program could remain efficient, thanks in part to traditional courtroom safety procedures. They could take 40 prisoners at a time and process them if they were allowed to use the current courtroom practices. These old policies allow law enforcement to bring up to 75 individuals into the courtroom at once, but under the Ninth Circuit's decision to relax courtroom safety protocols, law enforcement officers are now forced to limit groups of prisoners before the court to no more than a handful at a time. This makes it increasingly impractical for judges to hear cases due to the amount of time required for law enforcement to move small numbers of prisoners in and out of the courtroom. There simply aren't the hours in a day.

I take the independence of the courts very seriously. That is why, when every sheriff in my State comes to me and says that there is a court ruling that is endangering their deputies and the public, I am going to urge that the decision be overturned by the proper authority.

This makes a difference in Arizona for another reason as well. We have a lot of older courthouses. Some of them are historic courthouses. These buildings simply aren't built for today's needs in terms of access for prisoners and the public within these courthouses. Sometimes they have to go in the same doorways and in the same hallways. If law enforcement and courtroom security personnel are not allowed to have standards in terms of prisoner restraint, then you endanger

the safety of individuals visiting the courthouse and others. You are simply unable to process the number of cases that we have in Arizona, particularly near the border with regard to immigration cases.

I hope that the High Court, the Supreme Court, will grant cert here and examine this ruling. It really makes a difference in a State like Arizona.

With that, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this week on an island nation one-tenth the size of Rhode Island, more than 60 countries will gather at the fourth international Our Ocean Conference. Catalyzed by then-Secretary of State John Kerry, the United States hosted the premier international ocean conference in 2014 and 2016. Secretary Kerry's legacy continues with the Malta Conference now going on, hosted by the European Union, and that will be followed by scheduled conferences in Indonesia in 2018 and Norway in 2019.

Nations come to these conferences to share ocean conservation achievements and to pledge future efforts in sustainable fisheries, marine debris prevention, marine protected areas, maritime security, and climate change. At last count, conference organizers in Malta are anticipating more than 150 separate pledges from governments, NGOs, and the private sector. Since Secretary Kerry started it, the Our Ocean Conference has produced hundreds of commitments, totaling nearly \$10 billion and protecting nearly 4 million square miles of ocean. Though the oceans cover more than 70 percent of our Earth, they are often taken for granted. Oceans drive our weather, cool our planet, provide food and income for billions of people, and absorb much of our carbon dioxide emissions.

So for my 181st "Time to Wake Up" speech, I will return to the topic of what we are doing to our oceans. The oceans provide a hard-to-deny reminder of what is happening, thanks to greenhouse gas emissions, climate change denial, and America's legislative paralysis.

Physics and chemistry don't care about fossil fuel industry propaganda. It doesn't affect them at all. Science measures how our carbon pollution continues to drive unprecedented change in the Earth's oceans.

The oceans have absorbed about one-third of all the excess carbon dioxide emitted by human activity since the Industrial Revolution; that is, around 600 gigatons of carbon dioxide absorbed by the ocean. The effect of absorbing all that carbon dioxide is chemical, making ocean water more acidic at the fastest rate in 50 million years. Hu-

mankind has been on the planet only about 800,000 or so years, so 50 million goes way back.

This acidification is potentially calamitous for the ocean ecosystem. Off Washington, Oregon, and Northern California, 50 percent of pteropods were measured to have "severe shell damage," mostly from acidified sea water. If that species collapses, the bottom falls out of the oceanic food chain, with a cascading effect up to us at the top of the food chain.

Ocean acidification is causing real economic concerns on coasts all around the country. It is affecting Florida's reefs, for instance. Rhode Island's clambers, lobstermen, and aquaculture growers watch with real alarm the damage acidified seas are doing on America's northwest coast. Oyster hatcheries there experienced significant losses when new hatches were unable to grow their shells in the acidified seawater. Those hatcheries now need to buffer ocean water to keep the pH at a survivable level for baby clams, oysters, and other shellfish. Well, you can do that for your aquaculture lab, but you can't do that for the ocean. So it bodes well for the future of these shellfish.

In addition to the CO₂ the oceans have absorbed—30 percent of that—they have also absorbed heat. They have absorbed over 90 percent of the excess heat that climate change has trapped in our atmosphere, thanks to the operation of the greenhouse gases we have emitted. The oceans, in doing that, have conferred on us an extraordinary blessing because without their absorbing more than 90 percent of that heat—forget the 2 degrees Centigrade cap that we worry about—we would likely be already more than 36 degrees Centigrade hotter. That isn't just life changing; that is species-changing variation in our planet. When oceans absorb all of this heat, which is equivalent to more than a Hiroshima-style nuclear bomb per second going off, the principle of thermal expansion kicks in. As oceans warm, they expand, and as the world warms from the remaining heat, ice melts. So between the two, sea levels rise.

NOAA, in January, updated global sea level rise estimates based on the latest peer-reviewed scientific literature. Ice sheets and glaciers are melting faster than previously expected, raising global sea level rise estimates in this century—under the "we do nothing on climate change" scenario—by around 20 more inches on average.

Apply these findings to the U.S. coast, and the news gets particularly harsh for the northeast Atlantic coast, including my home State of Rhode Island. Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Management Council is now telling us that we need to plan for as much as 9 to 12 vertical feet of sea level rise by the end of this century. The refusal of the Republican majority to do anything serious about climate change is

going to have a big effect on the very map of my State.

This is the present Upper Narragansett Bay, including Providence up here, our capital city, down to Greenwich Bay down here, and Warwick on the west side. Over here, we have Bristol and Warren on the east side of the image, and it still looks actually very much like it did when early explorers first came to Rhode Island in the 1600s. And it looked very much like that for centuries before, when the Narragansetts and the Wampanoags lived here. But as climate change raises sea levels, all of this is changing rapidly.

The Coastal Resources Management Council has developed something called STORMTOOLS, which is an online simulation to model sea level rise and storm surge, so we can see how rising sea levels will affect my State.

This is the same image as that one. I will put one over the other so that you can see the match. Everything that is blue is land and is now submerged on these 9-to-12-foot sea level estimates. It all has changed quite dramatically. Warwick Neck breaks off and becomes Warwick Neck Island. Much of the town of Barrington here becomes a new salt lake. This is a bedroom community with a lot of wealthy people living in very nice homes, and it all goes under water. Down here, Bristol and Warren become an island, and off of them, Poppasquash Point becomes two islands. This continues all around the State. The map changes, and we become a Rhode Island archipelago. Look at Newport, Little Compton, Tiverton, Providence, Jamestown, Point Judith. Flooded areas in my State represent billions of dollars in losses to Rhode Islanders.

Of course, around the visibly flooded areas are the less visible areas where legal setbacks, flood zones, velocity zones, and other building restrictions prevent construction. In those areas that are still above water, it is still unbuildable because the property has become uninsurable, unmortgageable, or unsellable. That is a pretty hard hit to expect my State to take without objection.

It is not just Rhode Island; all sorts of changes are happening along America's coasts. Up in the Gulf of Maine, ocean waters are warming faster than nearly any other place on earth. A study published in *Elementa* last month found that summer temperatures in the Gulf of Maine last two months longer than in the 1980s. Longer, warmer summers benefit some species, but others get hurt, including what little is left of the iconic cod.

Native villages in Alaska and island communities in Louisiana and Maryland are facing tough decisions about abandoning traditional shorelands and islands and relocating. Around the world, entire nations are planning for relocation as the ocean steadily rises over their island homes.

Layered on top of this sea level rise is the worsening risk of storm surge

and flooding from hurricanes and other storms. The Presiding Officer does not need to be told about this. His State has experienced it firsthand.

This satellite image is a snapshot of this particularly destructive 2017 hurricane system. From the left to right, we see Hurricane Katia, Hurricane Irma—at category 5 strength—and Hurricane Jose down here.

As the recovery efforts continue for our citizens in Puerto Rico, Florida, Louisiana, and Texas, and we look at hundreds of billions of dollars in disaster relief emergency spending, here in Washington we might want to think about helping coastal States around the country get serious about predicting what is coming, shoring up our coastlines, fortifying coastal infrastructure, and preparing for what climate change has in store for us.

Climate change is not the only way we are damaging the oceans. Each year, around 8 million metric tons of plastic waste enters our oceans from land. By 2050, we could see as much plastic in the oceans as fish in the oceans by weight, since plastics do not fully degrade in the ocean. They just break down into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic, and those travel the globe on ocean currents.

Plastic is now everywhere; on our beaches, in our oceans, ingested and entangling our wildlife. It is even in tapwater, salt, and other foods that we humans consume. Plastic waste has been found on remote islands, in deep-sea sediments, and in sea ice.

In an area previously inaccessible to researchers due to that sea ice, the Arctic is apparently releasing frozen plastic back into the oceans. That is how badly we are polluting our oceans. An international research expedition to the North Pole even found chunks of plastic littering that remote region.

Thankfully, there is interest in solving our ocean trash problem in the Senate. At last year's Our Ocean Conference, over \$1 billion was pledged to combat marine debris. Additional commitments are expected this year. Our Senate Oceans Caucus work parallels work around the world. The Senate Oceans Caucus is a bipartisan group. There are 36 of us. We have made marine debris one of our focus areas.

In August, by unanimous consent, we passed the Save Our Seas Act, a bipartisan bill to reauthorize NOAA's marine debris program and expand its ability to deal with severe marine debris events, where tsunamis or huge storms sweep enormous amounts of plastic garbage into the oceans and then ultimately onto our shores.

The bill asks the President to increase U.S. international efforts to reduce marine debris, including improving international waste management practices and improving research on plastics that will actually biodegrade in the ocean. It also directs the U.S. Trade Representative to start considering marine plastic debris—much of which comes from just a few coun-

tries—when dealing with them in future trade agreements.

We reinforced this piece of the bill recently in the National Defense Authorization Act, which we passed just last month.

The Save Our Seas Act garnered support from environmental NGOs, from corporations, from chemical trade groups, but there is still much more work to do. We have abused and ignored our oceans for far too long. The oceans are warning us in every way they know how, and we can't afford to ignore those warnings any longer. We must start taking serious action to respond to what we are doing to our oceans. I promise you, anybody who knows anything about oceans hears those alarm bells ringing. It is time for us to wake up.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture vote on the Hargan nomination occur at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, October 4, and that if cloture is invoked, the Senate vote on confirmation at 3:15 p.m. with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

I further ask that, upon disposition of the Hargan nomination, the Senate vote on cloture on the Quarles nomination, and that if cloture is invoked, the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination at 10 a.m. on Thursday, October 5; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; further, that the time on Wednesday evening be for debate on the Quarles and Cissna nominations, concurrently.

I further ask that the cloture vote on the Cissna nomination occur upon disposition of the Quarles nomination, and that if cloture is invoked, all time postcloture be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

I further ask that following disposition of the Cissna nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Gingrich nomination, with a vote on cloture at 1:45 p.m. on Thursday; and that if cloture is invoked, the Senate vote on confirmation at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, October 16.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. For the information of all Senators, we have now locked in the following vote schedule: one vote at 11 tomorrow morning, two votes at 3:15 tomorrow afternoon, three votes at 10 a.m. on Thursday, and one vote at 1:45 on Thursday afternoon.

This will allow debate time on all of the pending nominations and accommodate important committee hearings that will be occurring off the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 351, 352, 353, 354, and 355.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Halsey B. Frank, of Maine, to be United States Attorney for the District of Maine for the term of four years; D. Michael Hurst, Jr., of Mississippi, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi for the term of four years; Jeffrey B. Jensen, of Missouri, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri for the term of four years; Thomas L. Kirsch II, of Indiana, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana for the term of four years; and William J. Powell, of West Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of West Virginia for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Frank, Hurst, Jensen, Kirsch, and Powell nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 357 and 358.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Stephen Censky, of Missouri, to be Deputy Secretary of Agriculture; and Ted McKinney, of Indiana, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Censky and McKinney nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and 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.

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY'S MAXWELL H. GLUCK EQUINE RESEARCH CENTER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to mark the 30th anniversary of the University of Kentucky's Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center. The city of Lexington, KY, known as the Horse Capital of the World, is the proud home to the Gluck Center dedicated to scientific research and education. Because of its cutting-edge research, the center is internationally renowned and a destination for students, faculty, and members of the equine industry.

Since the center's founding in 1986, it has made significant contributions to the field of equine study. As part of the university's College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment, the faculty at the Gluck Center are also committed to the education of the next generation of veterinarians and researchers.

The Gluck Center's success would be impossible without the vision of its founder and namesake, Maxwell Gluck. With his wife, Muriel, the Glucks encouraged the university to establish the center and grow UK's connection to the equine industry, which is vital to

the economy and culture of the Commonwealth.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the director of the Gluck Center, Dr. David Horohov, and the chair of the Gluck Foundation, Dr. Stuart Brown. Under their leadership, this center has continued to grow and earn acclaim from all levels of the equine industry. Their efforts, along with those of UK's administration, including President Eli Capilouto and college dean Nancy Cox, have helped to fulfill Maxwell and Muriel Gluck's vision.

To mark this milestone, the center is hosting a seminar and open house featuring the inaugural "Teri Lear Memorial Lecture," which will honor the life and scholarly legacy of Dr. Teri Lear, a beloved UK professor of veterinary science who passed away last year. Dr. Lear was one of the foremost experts of equine cytogenetics and helped lead the Horse Genome Project. This lecture series will continue to build upon the center's reputation for excellence in research.

In addition to the lecture, the Gluck Center will also host a celebration to honor one of its faculty members, Dr. Peter Timoney, for a career of international accomplishment in the field of equine infectious disease treatment. Dr. Timoney previously served as the director of the Gluck Center from 1989 to 2006 and is also the past president of the World Equine Veterinary Association. I would like to add my voice to the chorus of congratulations to Dr. Timoney for his accomplished career, and I look forward to his continued contributions to his field.

For 30 years, this center has helped lead in equine research. I am proud to join the UK community to celebrate the Gluck Equine Research Center and its many contributions to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and to the industry. I urge my colleagues to help me commemorate this occasion, and I look forward to many more achievements from the Gluck Center.

TRIBUTE TO TIMUEL D. BLACK, JR.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, sometimes, when I am asked to describe my politics, I say, "I believe in the Gospel of Saints Paul"—Paul the Apostle, Paul Douglas, Paul Simon, and Paul Wellstone.

Paul the Apostle was, of course, one of the most important figures in the history of the early Christian Church. Paul Douglas, Paul Simon, and Paul Wellstone were Members of this Senate and champions of human rights and human dignity.

This Friday, another champion of human rights and human dignity—Dr. Timuel Black—will be honored by Citizen Action Illinois with its ninth annual Pauls Award, named for Paul Simon and Paul Wellstone.

I am lucky enough to have been friends with both Pauls—Simon and

Wellstone. I am sure that they would have approved heartily of the decision to honor Dr. Black with an award bearing their names.

Dr. Timuel Black is a decorated World War II veteran, an educator, author, labor leader, civil rights activist, and historian—and a bender of the moral arc of the universe. He is a visionary and—for me and so many others—a personal hero.

Timuel Black was born in 1918, in Birmingham, AL—the son of a sharecropper and the grandson of slaves.

He was 8 months old when his family moved to Chicago—the first wave of the great migration of African Americans from the Deep South to the North. They settled in a part of town called the Black Belt, now known as Bronzeville.

He attended DuSable High School, a legendary all-Black public high school, where his classmates included Nat King Cole and John Johnson, who would go on to found Jet and Ebony magazines.

On his 23rd birthday, Japan bombed U.S. Navy ships at Pearl Harbor.

He served 2 years in a segregated U.S. Army. He participated in the Battle of the Bulge, the invasion of Normandy and the liberation of Paris, and he earned four battle stars.

He thought he had seen the worst of World War II—then he witnessed what had happened at Buchenwald, the Nazi concentration camp.

The horrors that he witnessed at that death camp changed his life.

For a time, he was filled with despair. Then he resolved to spend the rest of his life doing whatever he could to advance the causes of human rights and human dignity.

He returned to Chicago and earned an undergraduate degree from Roosevelt University and a master's degree from the University of Chicago.

He helped establish the Congress of Racial Equality. He also helped found a labor union that helped me work my way through college: the United Packinghouse Workers of America.

He began his professional career as a social worker, but he quickly discovered that his real love was "teaching young men and women about the world they live in and how to be responsible citizens of that world."

He spent more than 40 years as a teacher, including positions at DuSable and other Chicago public schools, as well as Roosevelt University, Columbia College Chicago and schools in the City Colleges of Chicago system.

Timuel Black was watching television in December 1955 when he saw "this good-looking man in Montgomery, Alabama." He was so moved that he boarded a plane to meet him.

A year later, Tim Black convinced that young man to come to Chicago—the first time Dr. Martin Luther King would speak in the city.

In 1963, Dr. Black helped organize the Freedom Trains that carried thousands of Chicagoans to hear Dr. King and

others speak at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. He was there when Dr. King delivered his immortal "I Have a Dream" speech.

He was with Dr. King in 1966 when an angry mob jeered him in Chicago's Marquette Park neighborhood.

In 1983, Tim Black provided influential support to help elect another of his DuSable High School classmates, Harold Washington, the first African-American mayor of Chicago.

Some years later, a young community organizer who had just returned to Chicago with a Harvard law degree asked Professor Black to teach him about organizing people so they could create a better life for themselves and their children.

Over the years, Professor Black and that young organizer became good friends.

On January 20, 2009, it was my privilege to invite Professor Black and his incredible wife, Zenobia Johnson-Black, to be my guests as that community organizer swore an oath to become President of the United States of America—Barack Obama.

My friend, Paul Wellstone, had a beautiful definition of politics. He used to say: In the last analysis, politics is not predictions and politics is not observations. Politics is what we do. Politics is what we create, by what we work for, by what we hope for and what we dare to imagine.

Dr. Timuel Black has witnessed injustice and inhumanity, but he has never stopped working to believe in a better world, and he has never stopped working to make that world a reality. He is a true inspiration, a Chicago treasure, and an American hero.

REFUGEE ADMISSIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last Friday, President Trump announced that he will slash our refugee admissions to 45,000 in fiscal year 2018—the lowest annual target since the passage of the 1980 Refugee Act. Instead of embracing our moral and legal obligation to address the worst refugee crisis in global history, as has been our tradition for decades, President Trump seems intent on relinquishing our role as the humanitarian leader of the world. The dimming of our beacon is not just a symbolic loss; tens of thousands of human lives are now placed at risk.

There is no rational basis for this shameful retreat. The administration's own analysis shows that refugees contributed a net benefit of \$63 billion to our economy between 2005 and 2014. National security leaders across the political spectrum, including former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen, are unanimous in their view that refugees are the most stringently vetted travelers to the United States. Our commitment to welcoming refugees plays a critical role in strengthening our alliances in areas of conflict.

The President stands alone in his disregard for the staggering suffering we are witnessing around the world. Last month, the Senate Appropriations Committee—on which I serve as vice chairman—unanimously approved a funding bill that demonstrates our unwavering commitment to refugees. It fully funds offices that are critical to the continuity of refugee programs and even provides a \$50 million increase to the State Department's refugee assistance and resettlement missions. Our bipartisan bill repudiates any claims by President Trump that the United States is unwilling to commit the resources required to fund a refugee program that honors our history as a refuge for the persecuted. Even the conservative Heritage Foundation has called on President Trump to set annual refugee admissions "based on historical refugee levels," which have never dropped below 67,000 per year since the beginning of the Reagan administration.

I am proud that my own State of Vermont has welcomed and resettled approximately 7,500 refugees since fiscal year 1989. The city of Rutland was preparing to resettle an additional 100 refugees mainly from Syria last year and this fiscal year, until the Trump administration inexplicably halted certain refugee admissions and announced drastic reductions to the refugee resettlement program. Vermont and other States stand ready to do more to address this global crisis, but the leader of our country is shamefully directing them to do less.

Presidents have an obligation to protect our Nation's fundamental values. Presidents of both parties have long understood this. They have not forsaken our history as a nation founded by enterprising individuals seeking refuge and freedom from persecution. They have ensured that our policies do not betray our proud tradition as the humanitarian leader of the world.

This decision illustrates that President Trump is misinformed and that he has caved to the counsel of xenophobic voices seeking to hollow out our refugee program. By shutting our doors to thousands of innocent human beings fleeing persecution and tyranny, he misunderstands the history of the country he was elected to lead. I hope that he reconsiders his callous decision, as the law in fact empowers him to do, in light of emerging humanitarian concerns. Nothing less than our Nation's identity as an unwavering beacon of hope during the world's darkest chapters is at stake.

TRIBUTE TO RAINER WEISS, KIP S. THORNE, AND BARRY C. BARISH

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announced the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Physics to Rainer Weiss, Kip S. Thorne, and Barry C. Barish for "decisive contributions" to the observation of gravitational waves.

This landmark discovery marks a giant leap forward in human knowledge, and I salute these Americans on their honor.

Over 100 years ago, Albert Einstein predicted that massive objects and energy could distort space-time. In order to detect these "ripples" in the fabric of space and time, known as gravitational waves, scientists worked over many years to develop the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory, or LIGO.

On September 14, 2015, scientists working at LIGO detected a "chirp"—a ripple in space-time. What was observed because of LIGO was the result of two massive black holes merging together over 1.3 billion light years away. This breakthrough discovery means that we now have an entirely new way of observing the universe.

This achievement would not have been possible without the leadership of Dr. Weiss, Dr. Thorne, and Dr. Barish, along with the countless scientists who helped with the project, including the National Science Foundation.

Two of the distinguished recipients hail from my home State. Dr. Thorne and Dr. Barish are professors at the California Institute of Technology, and I am proud of the role that Cal Tech played in making this discovery possible. I also recognize Dr. Weiss, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor, for his achievement.

On behalf of all Californians, I commend these physicists on a well-deserved honor and for all that they have done to push our knowledge of the universe forward. Let us hope that this discovery will continue to expand the horizon of human knowledge and lead to new efforts in humanity's never-ending quest for enlightenment.

Again, I congratulate these three distinguished Americans and their families on this remarkable discovery and prestigious award.

TAIWAN'S 106TH NATIONAL DAY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, a week from today, on October 10, the Taiwanese people will celebrate their 106th Taiwanese National Day. I would like to take a few minutes to congratulate my Taiwanese friends on this important occasion.

Taiwan has long been a trusted friend of the United States and a valuable partner in the increasingly important Asia-Pacific region.

Taiwan is hugely important to Oregon. It is also one of Oregon's largest trading partners and a big export market for Oregon products like grain. Portland's annual Grand Floral Parade and Rose Festival host delegations from Taiwan. Portland, OR, and Kaohsiung, Taiwan, are sister cities.

These ties are both broad and deep, as I saw myself when I visited Taipei several years ago.

That was more than a year before Taiwan's historic 2016 election, but the Taiwanese people's commitment to democracy was already very much on display.

Because our people share values like freedom, respect for human dignity, and entrepreneurship, I am honored today to reaffirm the U.S.-Taiwan relationship.

I wish my friends, the Taiwanese people, a wonderful 106th National Day and a fortuitous year ahead.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the people and leaders of Taiwan on their National Day to take place on October 10. The United States and Taiwan have a long history of mutual trade and friendship that has promoted prosperity and security on both sides of the Pacific. The United States-Taiwan bilateral relationship continues to grow based on our shared democratic values and common strategic interests.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating the people of Taiwan on their success and thanking them for their continued efforts to work with the United States on economic growth and security cooperation. The people of both the United States and Taiwan have much to celebrate.

TRIBUTE TO DONNA SACKETT

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, government employment is often referred to as "public service." That phrase could not be more appropriate in the case of Donna Sackett.

Donna, a caseworker in my Utah office, is retiring after 22 years in the Senate. Given the caliber of person that she is, it is my privilege to share a bit about her.

Donna joined my team in 2014, bringing with her an unrivaled understanding of rural Utah. If you don't believe me, walk into any county meeting in rural Utah and ask about Donna Sackett. You will get a lot of smiles in return.

Donna built these personal relationships during her long residence in the State—she was born in Coleville, raised in Ogden—as well as past jobs with Governor Norm Bangert and Senator Bob Bennett.

Case work and constituent services work are not the right jobs for everybody. They require deep empathy and a delicate personal touch, as well as a good deal of resilience when dealing with sleepy government agencies, but they certainly were right for Donna.

As anyone will tell you, Donna is a wellspring of compassion. Early in her career as a caseworker in the Governor's office, her coworkers had to talk to her because she was working cases after hours and helping Utahns financially from her own pocket. Beginning caseworkers do not have a lot of money to give, as you might imagine, but like the widow in the Gospel story, Donna "cast in all that she had, even all her living," Mark 12:44.

That spirit of service still enlivens Donna Sackett. If someone comes to her with a problem, she will explore every avenue to put it right.

When an elderly Navajo man who had worked in uranium mining had trouble

getting special healthcare through worker's compensation, it was Donna who helped him out. When Juab County had trouble with its wilderness boundaries, it was Donna who helped county officials with the realignment.

These two examples show that Donna was capable of tackling a wide range of problems. She was at home working on Social Security claims or public lands disputes. The important thing was that she could help. During a brief stint at FEMA, she even traveled to New York to help the people of that State recover from Superstorm Sandy.

Donna worked hard for others, and she had a blast doing it. Her coworkers in Utah dubbed her the "fun sheriff," not to be confused with the "fun police," because she would often round up staff members for office parties. If they were lucky, she would bring her award-winning salsa. Her love, enthusiasm, and excitement for life made her quick to laughter and friendship, while making her equally capable on her Harley-Davidson or the dance floor.

Of course, Donna's cheerfulness and sacrifice are not limited to her day job. She loves to teach the young as a primary teacher for her church ward and to serve her neighbors and family. She is a loving wife to Byra Sackett, a loving mother to three sons—Trevor, Rodney, and Justin—and to her stepdaughter Karen. She is a loving grandmother and great-grandmother, and she cares for the afflicted, sometimes under her own roof. The time she spent caring for her mother, son Trevor, and stepdaughter Karen during the final stages of their lives demonstrated her conviction about the eternal nature of families.

If it wasn't plain enough already, let me say it plainer still: Donna Sackett is an inexhaustible source of love for others. She models Christ's love through her deeds.

In her job, as in her private life, Donna Sackett displayed a servant's heart. I will miss her dearly, and so will all the Utahns she touched over her valuable career in public service.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:00 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 289. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to issue permits for recreation services on lands managed by Federal agencies, and for other purposes.

H.R. 965. An act to redesignate the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site as the "Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park", and for other purposes.

H.R. 1547. An act to provide for the unencumbering of title to non-Federal land owned by the city of Tucson, Arizona, for purposes of economic development by conveyance of the Federal reversionary interests to the City.

H.R. 2316. An act to amend the Mineral Leasing Act and the Energy Policy Act of 1992 to repeal provisions relating only to the Allegheny National Forest.

H.R. 2582. An act to authorize the State of Utah to select certain lands that are available for disposal under the Pony Express Resource Management Plan to be used for the support and benefit of State institutions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2937. An act to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to authorize partnerships between States and nongovernmental entities for the purpose of reclaiming and restoring land and water resources adversely affected by the coal mining activities before August 3, 1977, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 703 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 903), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Social Security Advisory Board to fill the existing vacancy thereon: Ms. Nancy Altman of Bethesda, Maryland.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 289. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to issue permits for recreation services on lands managed by Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 965. An act to redesignate the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site as the "Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park", and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 1547. An act to provide for the unencumbering of title to non-Federal land owned by the city of Tucson, Arizona, for purposes of economic development by conveyance of the Federal reversionary interest to the City; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2316. An act to amend the Mineral Leasing Act and the Energy Policy Act of 1992 to repeal provisions relating only to the Allegheny National Forest; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2582. An act to authorize the State of Utah to select certain lands that are available for disposal under the Pony Express Resource Management Plan to be used for the support and benefit of State institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2937. An act to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977

to authorize partnerships between States and nongovernmental entities for the purpose of reclaiming and restoring land and water resources adversely affected by coal mining activities before August 3, 1977, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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-2949. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Phosphoric Acid Manufacturing and Phosphate Fertilizer Production Risk and Technology Review Reconsideration" (FRL No. 9968-01-OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2950. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Technical Amendments to Procedure 6" (RIN2060-AS86) (FRL No. 9968-02-OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2951. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Significant New Use Rules on Certain Chemical Substances" (RIN2070-AB27) (FRL No. 9959-81) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2952. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Finding of Failure to Submit State Implementation Plans Required for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone NAAQS; California; Sacramento Metro" (FRL No. 9966-86-Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2953. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of Kansas Air Quality State Implementation Plans; Construction Permits and Approvals Program" (FRL No. 9967-97-Region 7) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2954. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of Air Quality Implementation Plans; New Jersey, 2011 Periodic Emission Inventory SIP for the Ozone Nonattainment and PM2.5/Regional Haze Areas" (FRL No. 9968-05-Region 2) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2955. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming; Negative Declarations" (FRL No. 9968-11-Region 8) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2956. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Plans for Designated Facilities; New Jersey; Delegation of Authority" (FRL No. 9968-13-Region 2) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2957. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Reasonably Available Control Technology for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard" (FRL No. 9967-53-Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2958. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; Removal of Clean Air Interstate Rule Trading Programs Replaced by Cross-State Air Pollution Rule Trading Programs" (FRL No. 9968-15-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2959. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; 2011 Base Year Inventory for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard for the Maryland Portion of the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City Nonattainment Area" (FRL No. 9968-00-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2960. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; North Carolina Miscellaneous Rules" (FRL No. 9968-10-Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2961. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Minnesota; Prevention of Significant Deterioration" (FRL No. 9968-22-Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2962. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmit-

ting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; GA; Emission Reduction Credits" (FRL No. 9968-17-Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2963. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Delaware; State Implementation Plan for Interstate Transport for the 2008 Ozone Standard" (FRL No. 9968-20-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2964. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Delaware; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2012 Fine Particulate Matter Standard" (FRL No. 9967-99-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2965. A communication from the Chief of the Border Security Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Changes to the In-Bond Process" (RIN1515-AD81) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 21, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2966. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extension of Import Restrictions on Archaeological and Ecclesiastical Ethnological Materials from Guatemala" (RIN1515-AE33) (CBP Dec. 17-14) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 25, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2967. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to imported foods for fiscal year 2016; to the Committees on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; and Appropriations.

EC-2968. A joint communication from the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to Thefts, Losses, or Releases of Select Agents and Toxins for Calendar Year 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-2969. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "The Department of Labor's 2016 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. ISAKSON, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1906. A bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal to each of Glen

Doherty, Tyrone Woods, J. Christopher Stevens, and Sean Smith in recognition of their contributions to the Nation; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 1907. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief for disaster areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 1908. A bill to streamline the employer reporting process and strengthen the eligibility verification process for the premium assistance tax credit and cost-sharing subsidy; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 1909. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a system to educate individuals approaching Medicare eligibility, to simplify and modernize the eligibility enrollment process, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 1910. A bill to clarify membership requirements for the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. WARNER, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1911. A bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to transfer certain funds to the 1974 United Mine Workers of America Pension Plan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REED:

S. 1912. A bill to ensure that irresponsible corporate executives, rather than shareholders, pay fines and penalties; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. Res. 279. A resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. THUNE):

S. Res. 280. A resolution designating the week of October 2 through October 6, 2017, as "National Health Information Technology Week" to recognize the value of health information technology in transforming and improving the healthcare system for all people in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 146

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 146, a bill to strengthen accountability for deployment of border security technology at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

S. 293

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 293, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the deferral of inclusion in gross income for capital gains reinvested in opportunity zones.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 322, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 366

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 366, a bill to require the Federal financial institutions regulatory agencies to take risk profiles and business models of institutions into account when taking regulatory actions, and for other purposes.

S. 384

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 384, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the new markets tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 482

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 482, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain amounts paid for physical activity, fitness, and exercise as amounts paid for medical care.

S. 708

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 708, a bill to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1002

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1002, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 1042

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1042, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to exclude Segal Americorps Education Awards and related awards from income.

S. 1064

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1064, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to prohibit the stigmatization of children who are unable to pay for meals.

S. 1108

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1108, a bill to amend title 4, United States Code, to provide for the flying of the flag at half-staff in the event of the death of a first responder in the line of duty.

S. 1110

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1110, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide for private lactation areas in the terminals of large and medium hub airports, and for other purposes.

S. 1274

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1274, a bill to direct the President to establish an interagency mechanism to coordinate United States development programs and private sector investment activities, and for other purposes.

S. 1568

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1568, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of President John F. Kennedy.

S. 1589

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1589, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes.

S. 1595

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1595, a bill to amend the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 to impose additional sanctions with respect to Hizballah, and for other purposes.

S. 1766

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1766, a bill to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, and for other purposes.

S. 1769

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the name of the Senator from Missouri

(Mrs. McCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1769, a bill to require a new or updated Federal website that is intended for use by the public to be mobile friendly, and for other purposes.

S. 1791

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1791, a bill to amend the Act of August 25, 1958, commonly known as the "Former Presidents Act of 1958", with respect to the monetary allowance payable to a former President, and for other purposes.

S. 1827

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1827, a bill to extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1847

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1847, a bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to ensure that the needs of children are considered in homeland security, trafficking, and disaster recovery planning, and for other purposes.

S. 1867

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1867, a bill to amend title 40, United States Code, to eliminate the sunset of certain provisions relating to information technology, to amend the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 to extend the sunset relating to the Federal Data Center Consolidation Initiative, and for other purposes.

S. 1899

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1899, a bill to reauthorize and extend funding for community health centers and the National Health Service Corps.

S. CON. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 6, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 1907. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief for disaster areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I am the Senator from Florida, along with my

colleague MARCO RUBIO. We, of course, have been at the forefront of this terrible tragedy that is going on in Puerto Rico, and I want to comment on that.

By the way, speaking of bipartisanism, there is a good example. Senator RUBIO and I, when our State was hit by Irma, spent 3 days, going around together, showing that we were shoulder to shoulder trying to help Floridians overcome the tragedy that had just befallen them. We dished out food together. We went and surveyed the floods. We went into the poor, little cities. We went and thanked university students who had rescued the elderly, the frail, when they were abandoned. We went all across the State. The day after the storm, we went first into the Keys to see the destruction there. Senator RUBIO and I have been joined at the hip.

When it comes to looking at what is happening in Puerto Rico, it is pretty obvious. Last week, a week had passed since the storm. In fact, the supplies were stacking up, but they were stacking up in the ports. They were not able to get out into the interior of the island. The two of us were pretty strong in our words; that you have to get the most capable organization in to do that when in fact it is almost like combat conditions, and that is the U.S. military.

Finally, Wednesday night of last week, they sent me a three-star general who started to get it organized. Now we are seeing it distributed out, but it is going to take more because it is an island that is just absolutely devastated. It is going to take a long time to recover, and it is going to take a lot more money.

Remember, these are our fellow American citizens. We saw the devastation in Florida. Now the continuing hardship is being tolled in Puerto Rico. It is a population where half are without drinking water, only 5 percent—and this is 2 weeks after the storm—of the electricity grid is restored, and cash is in short supply.

Whereas, in Florida we saw the flooded streets, the downed trees, the crushed cars, the flipped over mobile homes, limited access to critical supplies like gasoline. Property damage was everywhere, and it was the entire State. What we are seeing is—multiply that many fold, and that is what we are seeing in Puerto Rico.

We are working on a supplemental funding bill. Remember that right after the first storm in Texas, we passed a \$15 billion emergency supplemental appropriations bill. That is going to run out within the next few days so we have to have another supplemental funding bill.

As you can imagine, now it is not just Texas and Florida, but it is the Virgin Islands, it is Puerto Rico, and there are some other States as well. We are going to need to help the people cover the cost of recovery, and we are going to need to jump-start the local economy in those areas hardest hit by the storms.

Today I am going to introduce a piece of legislation. I call it the National Disaster Tax Relief Act, which would give people affected by these storms some much needed tax relief. This is in the shadow of the conversations taking place, as we speak, in a hearing—which I have just come from—in the Finance Committee about future reform of the Federal Tax Code.

The bill I am introducing today would do four things: One, it would let businesses and farmers immediately write off their cleanup costs, not just their replacement costs.

For example, the Florida citrus growers in the central part of the State—and it was finally going to be a good news story on our citrus crop—half of the citrus buffeted by the wind is on the ground.

Go further south into Southwest Florida, 75 percent of the citrus is on the ground. What this would do is allow the citrus growers to be able to, in the first year, write off the costs—expenses, in other words—of removing the downed trees, not just the cost of a new tree. That is especially important to citrus growers all over the United States because they are already hurting from a plant disease, a bacteria known as greening, which kills the citrus tree in 5 years.

Therefore, there are a number of these groves that have been abandoned, but it is valuable land. We need to give an incentive to the citrus grower to be able to go in and plow under that citrus growth and replant—the immediate expensing of that plowing under, plus the replanting of what we think are hardier varieties of citrus that are more resistant to this disease, this bacteria called greening. We think that would be a huge incentive to try to save the citrus industry not only in my State but in Texas, Arizona, California. There is citrus also in Louisiana and some in other Southern States.

The second thing the bill does is it gives taxpayers the ability to exempt State and local disaster mitigation payments from Federal taxes, and it lets them save for the next big storm tax-free. That would be in a catastrophe savings account.

It would allow people to save tax-free \$150,000 to cover things not covered by insurance. In Southwest Florida, there are a lot of seawalls that cave in, seawalls that are extremely expensive to rebuild and repair. This tax-free account would allow them to put away savings for that and other kinds of costs of remediation. They go out, and they try to save their home by getting tarps on the roof, making certain repairs until they can get the replacement, and the insurance can pay for it. Expensing of those items in the Tax Code would certainly be that incentive.

The bill also includes extra infrastructure financing for areas damaged by the storms; for example, help for low-income housing needs and other infrastructure needs that are so important to economic recovery.

The fourth thing the bill does is it includes tax incentives for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and extends tax benefits that are available on the mainland but not in the territories like the full child tax credit.

Why should we treat our American citizens in a territory any differently taxwise on a child tax credit than we treat our citizens on the mainland, the main 50 States? It shouldn't be. It doesn't make sense.

What is happening in Puerto Rico should concern every American. Governor Rossello has warned of a humanitarian crisis if we do not quickly move to alleviate this situation.

The Coast Guard is working with FEMA and others to bring in drinking water and other critical supplies as well. Additional work is being done to restore power. Generators are being shipped in to help manage the load at the airport, and there are 30 flights per day now, which is projected to grow to 60 flights in the coming days. Meanwhile, as the evacuations continue, we don't want to leave Puerto Rico in tatters. We have to rebuild. That is going to be an expensive cost to pay.

As we are going into a supplemental package for all of these storm-affected areas, and since the utilities in Puerto Rico were so out-of-date and so arcane, let's think creatively. In remote villages, let's supply photovoltaic cells to generate electricity as a backup because another storm is going to come and the power lines are going to go down. Let's think creatively as we help these areas rebuild.

We are working on this supplemental package to get additional aid to those suffering, and I am hopeful that what I have suggested here as a tax incentive will be a part of that conversation. Our country is hurting. We should be doing everything we can to help it heal.

Now, not only are we healing from coming out of some ferocious storms, but now we have another grim reminder that, in America, we are not treating each other as we would want to be treated. Something is wrong in the psyche of some, so that whatever the motivation is, there would be mass execution. I hope we will soon have a very serious conversation about the direction of this country.

By Mr. REED:

S. 1912. A bill to ensure that irresponsible corporate executives, rather than shareholders, pay fines and penalties; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today, I am introducing the Corporate Management Accountability Act, which request each publicly traded company to disclose its policies on whether senior executives or shareholders bear the costs of paying the company's fines and penalties.

In 2014, the President of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, William Dudley, gave a speech on Enhancing Financial Stability by Improving Cul-

ture in the Financial Services Industry. In this speech, President Dudley said, "in recent years, there have been ongoing occurrences of serious professional misbehavior, ethical lapses and compliance failures at financial institutions. This has resulted in a long list of large fines and penalties, and, to a lesser degree than I would have desired employee dismissals and punishment. . . . The pattern of bad behavior did not end with the financial crisis, but continued despite the considerable public sector intervention that was necessary to stabilize the financial system. As a consequence, the financial industry has largely lost the public trust."

Since 2008, "banks globally have paid \$321 billion in fines . . . for an abundance of regulatory failings from money laundering to market manipulation and terrorist financing, according to data from Boston Consulting Group." Unfortunately, despite these fines, we continue to see disappointing behavior at our financial institutions, whether it is Wells Fargo betraying the trust of its customers by opening unauthorized accounts or it is Equifax endangering millions of consumers by compromising critical personal information. Indeed, in my home State of Rhode Island, nearly half the State may have been affected by the cybersecurity breach at Equifax. Given these and other breaches and lapses, it is clear that many financial institutions have a long way to go in rebuilding the trust of Rhode Islanders and the American people.

At the same time, it is also clear that more must be done than simply fining and penalizing financial institutions at the corporate level. Senior executives, many of whom are all too eager to take credit for a company's good news, must also take more responsibility for the bad news, especially if it is true that the buck stops with them. For example, the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission concluded "the financial crisis reached cataclysmic proportions with the collapse of Lehman Brothers," and yet, according to the Congressional Research Service, not a single senior executive officer at Lehman Brothers at the Federal level was charged, went to jail, or personally paid a Federal fine or penalty for the damage caused at Lehman Brothers that rippled through our economy in 2008.

According to Professor Peter J. Henning, who also writes for the New York Times in its White Collar Watch column, "a problem in holding individuals accountable for misconduct in an organization is the disconnect between the actual decisions and those charged with overseeing the company, so that executives and corporate boards usually plead ignorance about an issue until it is too late."

The Corporate Management Accountability Act I am introducing today is one attempt at helping to solve this problem. The bill asks publicly traded

companies to disclose whether they expect senior executives or shareholders to pay the cost of corporate fines or penalties. This approach is supported by University of Minnesota Law School Professors Claire Hill and Richard Painter, who also served as President George W. Bush's chief ethics lawyer, as well as U.S. PIRG, Public Citizen, and Americans for Financial Reform.

Companies must do a better job of aligning executive incentives so that they are motivated to put their shareholders, and not themselves, first. I urge all my colleagues to join this legislative effort to hold senior executives accountable for their actions.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 279—RE-AFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE RULE OF LAW IN CAMBODIA

Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 279

Whereas Prime Minister Hun Sen has been in power in Cambodia since 1985 and is the longest-serving leader in Southeast Asia;

Whereas the Paris Peace Accords in 1991 provided a vital framework, supported by the international community, intended to help Cambodia undertake a transition to democracy, including through elections and multiparty government;

Whereas the United States Government, for more than 25 years, has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in development aid and other types of assistance to the people of Cambodia and funded work in areas including civil society, capacity building for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), global health, and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal;

Whereas, despite decades of international attention and assistance to promote a pluralistic, multi-party democratic system in Cambodia, the Government of Cambodia continues to be undemocratically dominated by the ruling Cambodia People's Party (CPP), which controls every agency and security apparatus of the state;

Whereas the leadership of Cambodia's security forces, including all of its top military and police commanders, sit on the Central Committee of the politburo of the CPP;

Whereas the CPP controls Cambodia's parliament and can pass legislation without any opposition, and has often passed laws that benefit its rule and weaken the capacity of the opposition to challenge it;

Whereas each of the five elections that have taken place in Cambodia since 1991 were not conducted in circumstances that were free and fair, and each were marked by fraud, intimidation, violence, and the government's misuse of legal mechanisms to weaken opposition candidates and parties;

Whereas, in 2015, the CPP-controlled parliament passed the "Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations", known as LANGO, which gave the government sweeping powers to revoke the registration of NGOs found to be operating with a political bias in a blatant attempt to restrict the legitimate work of civil society;

Whereas, since the passage of LANGO, the Interior Ministry has announced that it was surveilling several civil society organizations and their employees for allegedly aiding Cambodia's opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP);

Whereas both the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) have a long history in Cambodia, engaging local partners and building capacity for civil society, democracy, and good governance;

Whereas, on August 23, 2017, Cambodia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordered the closure of NDI and the expulsion of its foreign staff on allegations that it had violated LANGO and was conspiring against Prime Minister Hun Sen;

Whereas, on September 15, 2017, Prime Minister Hun Sen called for the withdrawal of all volunteers from the United States Peace Corps, which has operated in Cambodia since 2006 with 500 United States volunteers providing English language and healthcare training;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia in 2016 arrested four senior staff members of the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), as well as a former ADHOC staff member and official on the National Election Committee (NEC), and held them in pre-trial detention for 427 days until released on bail on June 29, 2017, in the wake of sustained international pressure;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia arrested activist and women's rights defender Tep Vanny in August 2016 and has kept her in prison for over a year;

Whereas the prominent Cambodian political commentator Kem Ley was assassinated on July 10, 2016, five days after a senior Cambodian general publicly called on the Cambodian Armed Forces to "eliminate and dispose of" anyone "fomenting social turmoil" in Cambodia;

Whereas Kem Ley had been a frequent critic of Prime Minister Hun Sen, fueling concerns that his killing was politically motivated and ordered by higher authorities;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia has taken several measures to restrict its media environment, including imposing a tax bill amounting to millions of dollars levied against independent media outlets that resulted in the closure of independent newspaper The Cambodian Daily in early September 2017;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia has ordered several radio stations to stop the broadcasting of Radio Free Asia and Voice of America;

Whereas the next general election in Cambodia is scheduled for July 29, 2018, and the CPP continues to use intimidation and misuse of legal mechanisms to weaken political opposition and media organizations in order to retain its power;

Whereas the Cambodian parliament in 2017 passed two repressive amendments to Cambodia's Law on Political Parties that allow authorities to dissolve political parties and ban party leaders from political activity, and which contain numerous restrictions tailored to create obstacles for opposition parties in an attempt to maintain the CPP's hold on power;

Whereas Kem Sokha, the President of CNRP, was arrested on September 3, 2017, and charged with treason and conspiring with the United States Government to overthrow the Government of Cambodia, and if convicted faces up to 30 years in prison, which sets the stage for the CNRP to be dissolved;

Whereas the United States Embassy in Cambodia has publicly called for the immediate release of Mr. Sokha and the removal of restrictions on civil society;

Whereas the CNRP's previous leader, Sam Rainsy, remains in exile due to an outstanding warrant for his arrest in a politically motivated criminal case;

Whereas Human Rights Watch reported that local elections held in Cambodia on June 4, 2017, took place in a "threatening environment hostile to free speech and genuine political participation, leading to elections that were neither free nor fair";

Whereas international election monitoring groups reported fundamental flaws in the electoral process and violations of Cambodia's election campaign rules during June's local election;

Whereas the Interior Ministry of Cambodia demanded that two election-monitoring organizations cease their activities just months after the local elections for allegedly violating the LANGO law, which will allow the CPP to continue to increase restrictions on election monitoring as the 2018 national elections approach;

Whereas, despite irregularities in the electoral process, the CNRP made significant gains in local elections compared to previous cycles, making clear that national elections in 2018, if they are conducted freely and fairly, will be tightly contested;

Whereas national elections in 2018 will be closely watched to ensure openness and fairness, and to monitor whether all political parties and civil society groups are allowed to freely participate;

Whereas, on September 7, 2017, the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate reported out the fiscal year 2018 appropriations bill for the Department of State and foreign operations (S. 1780), which restricted any funds to the central Government of Cambodia unless it has "ceased efforts to intimidate civil society and the political opposition in Cambodia, is credibly investigating the murder of social and political activists" and "is supporting the conduct of free and fair elections in Cambodia through a non-partisan election commission; fair election processes; open and inclusive participation, to include the return of exiled former opposition leaders and the release of jailed opposition leaders and civil society activists; respect for freedoms of assembly, speech, and the press, and credible post-election dispute resolution mechanism"; and

Whereas S. 1780 also includes language addressing the "inadmissibility of Cambodia officials who undermine democracy in Cambodia": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia;

(2) condemns all forms of political violence in Cambodia, and urges the cessation of ongoing human rights violations;

(3) urges Prime Minister Hun Sen and the Cambodian People's Party to end all harassment and intimidation of Cambodia's opposition and foster an environment where democracy can thrive and flourish;

(4) urges the Department of State, in association with the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Department of the Treasury, to consider placing all senior Cambodian government officials implicated in the abuses noted above on the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list;

(5) urges the Government of Cambodia to free Mr. Kem Sokha immediately and unconditionally;

(6) calls on the Government of Cambodia to respect freedom of the press and the rights of its citizens to freely assemble, protest, and speak out against the government;

(7) supports electoral reform efforts in Cambodia and free and fair elections in 2018 monitored by international observers; and

(8) urges the President to communicate to the Government of Cambodia that if it ignores the recommendations of the international community and maintains the current restrictive and intimidating political environment, the United States Government will have no choice but to determine that the 2018 elections were not conducted freely or fairly because the results could not be an expression of the democratic will of the Cambodian people.

SENATE RESOLUTION 280—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 2 THROUGH OCTOBER 6, 2017, AS "NATIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WEEK" TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN TRANSFORMING AND IMPROVING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM FOR ALL PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES

Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. THUNE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 280

Whereas Congress has emphasized that the use of health information technology is essential to providing coordinated care, expanding access to care, and improving the quality of mental and physical health for all people in the United States;

Whereas health information technology is essential for improving patient care, ensuring patient safety, stopping duplicative tests and paperwork, and reducing healthcare costs;

Whereas Congress has recognized that the convergence of medical advances, health information technology, and high-speed broadband networks are transforming the delivery of care by bringing healthcare providers and patients together virtually, especially those patients who are in disadvantaged populations and areas;

Whereas the further development of precision medicine, which tailors medicines and treatments to the unique genetic blueprint, lifestyle, and environmental data of each patient, requires advances in health information technology to compare that data with the information of other individuals in order to predict illness and determine the best treatments;

Whereas Congress has recognized the need, and taken action, to modernize regulations in order to grow the health information technology market, improve the health of all people in the United States, create high-demand jobs, and stimulate market innovation; and

Whereas it is necessary to continue activities that are foundational to the transformation of healthcare delivery in the United States, including—

(1) promoting innovation in health information technology;

(2) opening interoperability between systems and devices; and

(3) exchanging health information confidently and securely among different providers, systems, and insurers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of October 2 through October 6, 2017, as "National Health Information Technology Week";

(2) recognizes the value of information technology and management systems in transforming healthcare for the people of the United States; and

(3) encourages all interested parties to promote the use of information technology and

management systems to transform the healthcare system of the United States.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I have 12 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 10 a.m., in open session, to receive testimony on the political and security situation in Afghanistan.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, "Wells Fargo: One Year Later."

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to hold a Business Meeting on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, beginning at 10:15 a.m. in Room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to hold a hearing on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. in Room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 10 a.m. in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "International Tax Reform."

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 10 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled "Nominations."

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 2 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled "Nominations."

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, in order to conduct a hearing entitled "The Every Student Succeeds Act: Unleashing State Innovation" on

Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing on the nomination of John M. Mitnick to be General Counsel, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SH-216 of the Hart Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Oversight of the Administration's Decision to End Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals."

COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate, on Tuesday, October 3, 2017 from 2 p.m., in room SH-219 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a Closed Member Roundtable.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Energy is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to hold a hearing on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in Room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 4; 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 Hargan nomination, with the time until 11 a.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:24 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, October 4, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

SPENCER BACHUS III, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2019, VICE PATRICIA M. LOUI, TERM EXPIRED.

SPENCER BACHUS III, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2023. (REAPPOINTMENT)

JUDITH DELZOPPO PRYOR, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2021, VICE LARRY W. WALTHER, TERM EXPIRED.

KIMBERLY A. REED, OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2021, VICE WANDA FELTON, RESIGNED.

CLAUDIA SLACK, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2019, VICE SEAN ROBERT MULVANEY, TERM EXPIRED.

CLAUDIA SLACK, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2023. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

NEIL JACOBS, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, VICE MANSON K. BROWN, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TIMOTHY KELLY, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CAREER, TECHNICAL, AND ADULT EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE BRENDA DANN-MESSIER.

FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY

ERNEST W. DUBESTER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS EXPIRING JULY 1, 2019, VICE CAROL WALLER POPE, TERM EXPIRED.

THE JUDICIARY

DON R. WILLETT, OF TEXAS, TO BE A CIRCUIT JUDGE, UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT, VICE EMILIO M. GARZA, RETIRED.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DAVID CHRISTIAN TRYON, OF OHIO, TO BE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY, SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, VICE DARRYL L. DEPRIEST, RESIGNED.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate October 3, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

HALSEY B. FRANK, OF MAINE, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF MAINE FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

D. MICHAEL HURST, JR., OF MISSISSIPPI, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

JEFFREY B. JENSEN, OF MISSOURI, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

THOMAS L. KIRSCH II, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

WILLIAM J. POWELL, OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

STEPHEN CENSKY, OF MISSOURI, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

TED MCKINNEY, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR TRADE AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS.

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on October 3, 2017 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

SPENCER BACHUS III, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2021, VICE LARRY W. WALTHER, TERM EXPIRED, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JUNE 19, 2017.