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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 5, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JODY B. HICE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agreed to the amendment of the House of Representatives to the bill (S. 371) "An Act to make technical changes and other improvements to the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017."

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

CONGRATULATING ALEC BAKER ON BEAR RESEARCH PROJECT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the work of a student at Penn State DuBois.

Alec Baker, a native of Clarion, Pennsylvania, is a student in the wildlife technology degree program at Penn State DuBois. He was recently awarded an Erickson Discovery Grant from Penn State's Office of Undergraduate Education for an independent research project.

Alec's area of study focused on black bears and the impact the bears have on agriculture and farmers in Pennsylvania, particularly, the Commonwealth's corn crop. Alec conducted the project this summer for the Pennsylvania Game Commission and gathered information in the field through October. He is processing his findings this fall.

Alec has conducted his research primarily using Clarion County as his study area. He has obtained nuisance bear reports for crop damage from the area dating back to the year 2000. He plans to chart trends in the data through these years and monitor sites for continued activity using cameras.

In total, 219 students applied to receive an Erickson Discovery Grant this year, and Alec was one of 83 students from all Penn State locations and campuses who received a grant. The Erickson Discovery Grant allows students to immerse themselves in original research under the direct supervision of a faculty member in order to obtain hands-on experience in their chosen field.

Alec has just completed his sophomore year in the wildlife technology associate degree program and will go on to earn a bachelor's degree in wildlife and fishery science.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Alec Baker for undertaking this important area of study. I have no doubt that his re-

search will help farmers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania better protect their crops from bear-related damage. Pennsylvania has one of the largest populations of black bears in North America, and thanks to studies like Alec's, the Commonwealth will be better able to understand how bears influence agriculture and how farmers can implement better management tactics to protect their crops.

I congratulate Alec for his achievement and all those who received the Erickson Discovery Award, and I look forward to the results.

RETREATING AMERICA

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it is sad to watch the Trump administration leading America in retreat, withdrawing positions of international leadership, hollowing out the State Department, crippling us for years to come.

Last night, there was an example of that retreat right here on the floor of the House as our Republican friends were unable to address their plan for raising taxes for Americans in every State by restricting their ability to deduct State and local taxes. Why force millions of Americans to pay taxes on taxes?

Why, Mr. Speaker, is there a proposal to destabilize insurance rates across America, leading to 10 percent premium increases year after year, and to have up to 13 million additional uninsured Americans over the course of the next 10 years?

They have no answer as to why to mortgage our children's future for greater benefits for the richest and most privileged Americans. When corporations are recording record-high profits and have trillions of dollars of

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

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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profits overseas, why are we borrowing to provide more benefits to the largest corporations and wealthiest people while we are ignoring the people who visit our offices every day seeking not a sympathetic ear, but action, for example, action on the opioid crisis and the epidemic of opioid deaths claiming 64,000 Americans last year?

Our former colleague, Patrick Kennedy, whose advocacy is informed by his own struggle to overcome opioid addiction, will testify today in the other body that we could easily productively spend up to \$200 billion more dealing with the crisis, helping people with recovery. The Senate is proposing to increase one ten-thousandth of that amount—not \$200 billion, but \$20 million—to deal with this crisis because we don't have the money, yet we are borrowing \$1.5 trillion to give additional tax benefits to those who need them the least.

We are not being able to adequately help our veterans, whose needs are clear to anybody who visits the Veterans Administration hospital in their State, or provide investments in roads and bridges and transit or in water and sewer that would strengthen every community, make it safer and business more competitive.

Good policy and effective investment is possible if we are not mortgaging our children's future, borrowing vast sums of money to lavish more tax reductions on people who don't need it, while ignoring the needs of people who do, who visit offices every day here on Capitol Hill.

America does not have to be in retreat, claiming poverty, that we are helpless to meet the needs of the American people, if Congress finds the courage and the will to do its job.

SANCTUARY CITIES

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to talk about an issue that women are talking about every single day, and as I am home and out and about in my district, I hear this repeatedly. They will come up to me and they will say: MARSHA, I am becoming a security mom. I fear for the security of my children. I am concerned about what is happening on our streets and in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, last week, after the verdict came down in the Kate Steinle trial, the fact that a criminal illegal alien was not found guilty, I received so many comments and calls from people saying something needs to be done about this because justice was not delivered for the life of Kate Steinle.

That brings us to the issue of sanctuary cities and those policies, the very idea that some elected officials or some cities could choose to say: We will become a haven for those who are

outside of Federal law—but not all Federal law, just this particular Federal law.

That defies common sense. It defies reason because we are a nation of laws, a nation that abides by the rule of law, a nation of law and order—not of anarchy.

Sanctuary city policies are making America less safe. On this, there should be no doubt. We have to think: What does this example set for our country? What does it say to people who abide by the law, who feel that their lives are endangered, that their security is endangered? What kind of message do sanctuary policies send to the thin blue line, people who stand to protect us every single day?

I would suggest that sanctuary city policies are cracking the foundation of our democracy. It is why it is important that this body take action. I would suggest it is why it is important that we pass the CLEAR Act, legislation I have authored that would strip sanctuary cities of funding, that would require that criminal illegal aliens be deported from this country.

HONORING MAYOR WILLIAM V. BELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to honor and recognize a great American, a visionary, a statesman, and a friend, Mayor William V. Bell, better known as Mayor Bill Bell. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, my friend Bill Bell ended 16 years of distinguished service as mayor of the city of Durham, North Carolina, located in my congressional district.

Mr. Speaker, Durham has always been a progressive city, a city where I attended undergraduate school and law school at North Carolina Central University. Durham has always been a progressive city, above the average, but under Bill Bell's leadership, the city has become a thriving Southern city rivaling Charlotte and even Atlanta, Georgia.

Bill Bell's work as mayor is but part of a long tenure of service to Durham that spans more than four decades. This week, I join the entire Durham community in thanking Mayor Bill Bell for his many, many years of public service. With Mayor Bell's retirement last evening, December 4, 2017, he leaves his office having literally transformed the Durham community.

The city's leadership has now been passed to a new mayor, Steve Schewel, who is also a friend and a visionary leader. The city of Durham, North Carolina, is in good hands.

Born William V. Bell in 1941, Bill grew up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He received a degree in electrical engineering from Howard University here in Washington, D.C., and then went on to receive his master's degree

in electrical engineering from New York University. After graduating, Bill returned to North Carolina, where he worked as a senior engineer at IBM Corporation in Durham.

Bill Bell has been a community development trailblazer not only as mayor, but as vice president and chief operating officer of United Durham Incorporated since 1996, where he used the acronym UDI.

Even during his days as a young engineer, Bill Bell had a unique vision for his beloved community. This vision led to Bill's election to the Durham County Board of Commissioners in 1972. At the time, Bill was one of two African-American commissioners on the five-member board. Bill Bell served on the board of county commissioners until 1994, and again from 1996 to the year 2000, even serving as its chairman from 1982 to 1994.

□ 1015

In 2001, Mr. Speaker, Bill Bell was elected mayor of the city of Durham. He was then reelected seven—yes, that is seven—times, serving as Durham's longest serving mayor for 16 years.

Mayor Bill Bell will be remembered for leading the city of Durham toward great progress. His legacy includes heading up the transformation of downtown Durham from boarded-up windows to a city which is a top destination and is now home to a variety of thriving businesses and technology startups as well as major projects, such as the Durham Performing Arts Center and the American Tobacco Campus.

It is a thriving city, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage anyone to take a look at Durham and see how impressive this city is. From leading the transformation of downtown Durham to placing a renewed emphasis on even addressing gun violence in the community, Mayor Bell has always fought to improve the lives of his constituents.

It has been a pleasure to work with Mayor Bell on behalf of the citizens of Durham in the first district. The Durham community is stronger thanks to Bill Bell's leadership. He is, without a doubt, a visionary trailblazer who will go down in history having left a positive mark on his city.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, Mayor Bill Bell turned over the office now to Mayor Steve Schewel. Mayor Schewel served on the Durham City Council since 2011, and I know he will continue to build on this legacy.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am told that Mayor Bell's daughters, Tiffany Bell, Anjane Nicole Bell, and Kristen Vaughan Bell-Hughes, are all excited about their dad's decision to enjoy a life of retirement. I don't believe Bill Bell is going to actually retire. I am sure he is going to spend less time in public service, but I am sure he will continue his advocacy in some significant way.

While Bill Bell is deserving of far greater accolades than I have just recited over the last few minutes, I ask

my colleagues today to join me in recognizing this great American, Bill Bell. On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, the residents of Durham, North Carolina, and the people of the First Congressional District, I express my sincere appreciation for Mayor Bill Bell's elective service, his dedicated service, and I wish him nothing but my best wishes in the months and years to come.

I thank Bill Bell for his leadership.

SEXUAL ASSAULT ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when teenagers select universities to attend, they assume that their school will protect and take care of them if something horrible occurs. Hannah was no different when she decided to attend Howard University in 2006. But on a Friday night of her sophomore year, she realized how deeply misplaced her trust in the school was.

On that night, Hannah and her friends went to a fellow student's house party. It was a typical college evening filled with dancing and laughter, but it wasn't until the party began to wind down that Hannah's friends noticed she was missing. Hannah was always very safety conscious and never wandered off alone, so her friends were immediately worried and began frantically looking for her in the house. They called her name and searched the entire first floor. Hannah was nowhere to be found.

They tried to go upstairs to search the second floor, but a man grabbed them and forced them down the stairs. He said that nobody was allowed to go upstairs. Hannah's friends argued with him. They screamed her name and threatened to call the police.

Just as the situation was escalating, Hannah appeared at the top of the stairs. She was a mess. She was confused, and she was barely able to walk or to speak. The girls took Hannah by the arms and immediately left the house. Something really awful had happened to her, so they rushed her to the Howard University emergency room.

Mr. Speaker, here is where the university system completely failed her. When the doctor finally came to see Hannah, he told her she was too drunk and she should go home and just sleep it all off. The friends begged the doctor to give her a rape kit, but he just refused and sent them away.

This is malpractice, Mr. Speaker. Rape kits can provide critically important evidence in sexual assault cases, especially cases where the victim has been drugged.

When Hannah woke up the next morning, she was in so much pain she could barely walk, so she called the police and returned to the university emergency room for a rape kit. But because Hannah couldn't remember ex-

actly what happened and who her assailant was, the police and the hospital staff again refused to conduct a rape kit.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of a rape kit is to find out who the assailant was.

Desperate and denied any assistance from her own university, Hannah still reached out for help. She went to George Washington University Hospital, but they told her that, since she was denied a rape kit at Howard University, she was not allowed to get one at this hospital. Hannah sought help and was rejected at every turn.

This is tragic, Mr. Speaker.

Most of us have kids. A lot of them go to universities—all four of mine did; three of them are girls—and we expect universities to do something to protect those students when a crime is committed against them. The doctors and medical staff at both university hospitals were apparently not trained to deal with traumatized rape victims, and they were clearly ignorant of how important forensic evidence is after an assault.

So to ensure this doesn't happen to more victims, I have introduced legislation that would require a university to provide access to a nurse or a doctor who is properly trained to provide medical care for trauma rape victims or have a plan in place to quickly get a victim to a nearby hospital. Universities must have a plan in place or have access to a staffer.

This bill is named the Megan Rondini Act in honor of another college rape victim from Texas, who was at the University of Alabama. She was denied proper post-rape treatment at a hospital. Eventually, she took her own life because of the fact that no one paid attention to her.

This bill will ensure victims can access the care they need. Having a SAFE, sexual assault forensic examiner, or a SANE, sexual assault nurse examiner, for rape victims at universities ensures that rape kits are properly examined and collected.

Universities not only need to have access to a SAFE, but they need to have a victim advocate trained in sexual assault on campus, and all rape kits from students and nonstudents must be quickly analyzed so that the offender can be determined.

Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of rape kits all over the country sitting on police shelves that just haven't been examined. This is awful.

Hannah was denied justice because of incompetence. Victims are people, too, Mr. Speaker, and schools, especially, should be prepared to deal with sexual assault victims; otherwise, there will be more victims like Hannah.

And that is just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING CONWELL-EGAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize Conwell-Egan Catholic High School and the \$5 million contribution they received to help educate the next generation of students in Bucks County. This gift, in recognition of the school's continued success, was donated by a 1972 graduate who wanted to thank his teachers for all they did to help shape his life.

The benefactor, Mr. Tom Lynch, said he gave the gift because "anything is possible when you get a good education." This quote rings true in the ears of every American. The opportunity to learn from a young age is a critical experience. Continued support for our teachers and our schools is of the utmost importance.

With this donation, Conwell-Egan plans to set a significant amount aside for scholarships and tuition assistance for families in need in our area. Generous contributions like these allow our educational institutions to grow and to offer greater support to our communities.

I congratulate Conwell-Egan, and we all thank Mr. Lynch for supporting such a great institution.

RECOGNIZING PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the players, coaches, and staff of the Palisades High School football team and to congratulate them on an incredible season. With their consistent displays of grit and tenacity, the Palisades Pirates should be proud of what they accomplished: a 13-1 season and the best record in Palisades football history.

Although their season ended with a tough loss in the playoffs, the Palisades Pirates football team should hold their heads high. They have worked hard, and they have made their community proud.

To the fans, friends, and families who have supported Palisades, we offer our congratulations. To all those who work with and support organized youth sports in our district, we offer our thanks. To the young student athletes on the Palisades football team, I say: Well done. I hope that you take the lessons of cooperation and determination that you have learned on the field with you when you step off the field. Our community is very proud of you.

INNOVATION IN MINNESOTA'S SIXTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 2017 recipients of the Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation Innovation Award. These four recipients received their awards for their ability to incorporate new and inventive ideas into their field.

I want to first congratulate Mighty Axe Hops in Foley for receiving the

For-Profit Emerging Company Award, which highlights their contributions to the hop industry and their efforts to develop an experimental hop yard.

Cybermation of Waite Park received the For-Profit Established Company Award for decades of work in digital healthcare technology for seniors. Cybermation has been innovating since 1996.

I also want to recognize the Talahi Community School for receiving the Nonprofit Organization Award for the school's commitment to building Minnesota's premier adaptive playground in St. Cloud.

Finally, I want to recognize Jugaad for also receiving a Nonprofit Organization Award for their Jugaad Leadership Program in St. Cloud that trains members of underrepresented communities with the knowledge and skills to produce grassroots change.

Again, congratulations to all of this year's award winners. I thank them for their innovation and contribution to our communities.

CAPITAL ONE'S GENEROSITY

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Capital One and its executive team and employees for their generosity and their commitment to the local communities they serve.

Capital One has generously contributed to the Boys and Girls Club of Central Minnesota to support the organization's mission to enable young people to reach their full potential.

Capital One's \$15,000 grant to fund Project Learn helps advance a focus on equipping kids with coding skills to meet the needs of the future. STEM and tech-related skills are important to the future of our Nation, and Capital One is making a significant investment in our future leaders.

Since 2012, Capital One has donated over \$80,000 to the Boys and Girls Club of Central Minnesota.

Again, I want to thank Capital One for their commitment to the young people of central Minnesota. We are blessed to have them and their team in our community and in the great State of Minnesota.

NEVER GIVE UP

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an amazing constituent of mine for his talent and perseverance. From 2003 to 2008, Mick Schultz from Kimball, Minnesota, was a professional snowmobile racer.

In 2008, while competing at a national snocross race, Mike was in a snowmobile accident that resulted in the loss of his left leg. After such a devastating experience, no one would have thought less of Mike if he stopped competing, but Mike Schultz did not give up. Instead, he was racing again at the national level in less than 8 months. Over the past 10 years, Mike has earned eight gold medals at the X Games in adaptive motocross.

Mike would not allow his accident to keep him from sharing his talent and spirit with the world. Mike's talent, however, is not limited to racing snowmobiles.

In 2010, Mike began snowboarding as research for his company, BioDapt, which develops prosthetic equipment for athletes. This led him to compete as a member of the U.S. Snowboarding team. He is now in his fourth season.

As if all of his other accomplishments are not enough, Mike is now a Kellogg's cereal celebrity. Over the years, immensely talented athletes have graced boxes of Frosted Flakes, and we are proud that this year Mike joins the ranks.

I am honored to congratulate Mike on all of his incredible accomplishments and his recognition by Kellogg's. Mike is proof of what a person can accomplish when he confronts life's challenges head-on. Mike is a winner and an example to us all. We are proud and honored that he is a member of our community.

IMPEACHMENT DISCUSSIONS

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am always grateful to have this preeminent privilege of standing in the well of the Congress of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that three prominent Democrats have asked to meet with me to discuss impeachment.

□ 1030

Mr. Speaker, I will meet with them in my office, and here is what I will say:

I will tell them that impeachment is not about Democrats. It is not about Republicans. I will tell them it is about democracy. It is about government of the people, by the people, for the people. I will tell them that it is about the Republic and that it is about what Franklin said: We have a Republic, if we can keep it.

I will tell them that I refuse to sit on the sidelines while the world is considering one of the greatest issues of our time. I will tell them that I will continue to be a part of this great debate.

I will tell them these words I have heard, but I do not know the origin of. I will tell them that if a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured, however far away.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell them that tomorrow we will bring Articles of Impeachment to the floor of the Congress of the United States of America for a vote.

NATIONAL MINERS DAY

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate National Miners Day.

National Miners Day is recognized on December 6 each year, and I want to

express my deep appreciation to the hundreds of thousands of men and women who work in our Nation's quarries, dredge operations, and other mine facilities to help build and power our Nation.

These workers do a great deal to extract the materials found in every home, building, road, bridge, and public works project.

U.S. domestic production and use of stone, sand, and gravel, or aggregates, amounted to 2.5 million tons of crushed stone, valued at \$25 billion. The U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration has reported that, throughout its 40 facilities, almost 3,000 people in my home State of Alabama owe their jobs to aggregates mining.

While performing this critical function, workers in the aggregates sector have helped make workplaces the safest they have ever been. In fact, 2016 marked the 16th consecutive year in which the industry reduced its injury rate from the year-earlier level. The rate stood at the record low level of just 1.95 injuries per 200,000 hours worked.

I applaud the safe practices of the aggregates industry and the hardworking men and women who are helping to continue this positive trend.

As chairman of the House Workforce Protections Subcommittee, I look forward to continuing to work with the Labor Department's Mine Safety and Health Administration to advance smart regulation and preventive enforcement that can help keep the workplace safe.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. LAUREL BLACKWELL

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of Dr. Laurel Blackwell. Laurel recently passed away after fighting cancer and other medical issues.

Laurel was raised at her childhood farm home in Monticello, Iowa. She obtained an associate's degree from Cottey College in Missouri and a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa. She later earned her doctorate in administration of higher education from the University of Alabama.

After an early career in K-12 education, she started working in Alabama's community college system. She rose from serving as a tutor to becoming the director of adult education at Wallace Community College in Dothan, Alabama, and the director of workforce development at Southern Union Community College in Opelika, Alabama. Ultimately, she would become the president of Chattahoochee Valley Community College in Phenix City, Alabama.

During my time as chancellor of Alabama's community college system, I grew to know Laurel as a very professional and dependable colleague. I appreciated her honest and direct approach to the issues we faced together.

During her career, she held numerous roles in professional and civic organizations. She was recognized with a Girl

Scout Woman of Achievement award and as the city of Dothan's first ever Community Leader of the Year.

Even though she retired from education, she never stopped working to make the world a better place. She launched Communities of Transformation, a program through the United Methodist Church focused on bringing together people from every segment of society to elevate families.

Suffice it to say, Laurel had a positive impact on so many lives throughout her time on this Earth. Whether it was helping a student at her community college reach their full potential or giving hope to a struggling family, so many people owe their success to Laurel Blackwell.

So, on behalf of Alabama's First Congressional District, I want to share my deepest condolences to Laurel's husband, Fred, and their four children. I hope they can all take comfort in knowing that Laurel will live on in the lives of the countless individuals she touched. She will be sorely missed.

TRIBUTE TO MARINE MAJOR ERIC BURKETT

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

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of one of my constituents, United States Marine Major Eric Burkett, from New Castle, Pennsylvania.

Major Burkett was deployed as a member of the 24th Expeditionary Force in Morocco as an Osprey pilot. On April 11, 2012, he was nearly killed in a plane crash, which took the lives of two of his brothers-in-arms.

After coming home to Walter Reed, he lost one of his legs and continues to recover from his numerous injuries to this day. His wife, Melissa, who also is a former marine, has been by his side from day 1, along with their loving six children.

Major Burkett may never fly again, but already with his recovery he soars high above most of us. It was his spirit of service and patriotism that led him to start a program at Fort Belvoir for adaptive archery for his fellow wounded warriors.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a poem penned by Albert Carey Caswell in his honor and in celebration of his new adaptive home, built thanks to the Gary Sinise Foundation.

At this time, I will read an excerpt from this poem:

As his two brothers, angels now up to Heaven
would rise . . .
Coming back home with only his family
upon which to rely . . .
So all by his side . . .
His fine wife, Melissa, and children giving
him the strength to try . . .
As he knew it was time . . .
Time to rebuild his life . . .
Armed with his heart of the strength and
iron will . . .
Giving him the power and courage to nourish
him to instill . . .

The strength to rebuild . . .
Who against all odds our wounded warriors
into that dark night move onward still
. . .

Mr. Speaker, it is people like Major Burkett, whom we celebrate. It is the people who put themselves in danger and harm's way in order to protect the rest of us. I am so proud and humble today to be able to submit this poem in honor of Major Burkett.

OSPREY DE CORPS
(By Albert Carey Caswell)

Osprey
Osprey De Corps
What a magnificent presence oh for sure
And oh what a Osprey De Force
As straight as an arrow heading for
Truer than true into that face of war
To serve and protect
His Country Tis of Thee he'll not neglect
To reek havoc upon the enemy a shear train
wreck
All in those magnificent shades of green
Such Strength In Honor seen
Soaring to new his courage convenes
With such impact this United States Marine.
Oh to be a United States Marine
Who in Strength In Honor are seen
Soaring to new heights to intervene
To fight the fight
What a Osprey De Force awesome sight
Who for all us out on his course took flight
Marines with wings,
one of the most impressive of all things
A sheer work of art this human being
Swooping down upon the enemy for the Na-
tion he so loves

A bulls eye,
hitting his mark all in his battle cry
To vanquish an enemy straight into the
heart of he flies
Going from vertical to horizontal as he
will not be denied
In and out of places others dare not to try
Making those boots on the ground realize
That he's got their backs up on high
Who bleeds Marine green all the time
And loves Marines so much he married a Ma-
rine this guy
One of the baddest of the bad upon which
this Nation relies
Who leads with his heart as he sets
his sights on high
Finding his mark
An Osprey De Corps all in his part
Oh what a force
All out on his most heroic course
A United States Marine burning bright,
this force
When, out on a mission crashed as death was
at his side

As his two brothers,
angels now up to Heaven would rise
Coming back home with only his family
upon which to rely
So all by his side
His fine wife Melissa and children giving him
the strength to try
As he knew it was time
Time to rebuild his life
Armed with his heart of the strength and
iron will
Giving him the power and courage to nourish
him to instill
The strength to rebuild
Who against all odds our wounded warriors
into that dark night move onward
still
As he won the battle but lose his leg
Realizing he'd never fly again on that day
When, he looked at his target and then his
options weighted
So setting his sights high out on his way
A Osprey De Corps on his way to recovery
with tear in eye seemed as he prayed

Bulls eye hitting the mark
As soon he was up and out the door
Leaving behind a town called pity for sure
When, to new heights his heart so soared
To Teach Us
To Reach Us
To Beseech Us All The More
Creating his own Hunger Games,
with his great appetite for recovery he hun-
gered for
And the last time I saw Major Burkett,
I had to look up
Because, with his fine heart way above me he
so soars
His wife Melissa he married up for sure
With four beautiful children he's thinks he is
the luckiest guy and can't ask for
more
Because, the families are the unsung heroes
whenever Johnny goes off to war
Who are the ones who must wait and worry
all the more
And when they come home give them such
comfort for their recovery to insure
And where would all these heroes be if it
were not but for all of these?
The families are our unsung heroes each day
our Lord so sees
Leading the way to recovery
Major Burkett all in those shades of green
Is one magnificent Osprey De Force seen
The pride of Pennsylvania for what he's done
and where he's been
Its courageous men like him off to war our
Nation sends
Who help win all those wars upon whom we
depend
For all that we hold sacred and so love and
adore
A one fine Osprey De Corps
Ooo Rah!

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S AGRICULTURE COMMUNITIES

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

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent a rural district in west Texas that is home to 14 million acres of farmland and thousands of hardworking farmers and ranchers. These men and women are feeding and clothing the American people. They are bolstering our economy and they are strengthening our national security.

As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I am committed to delivering results that are in the best interest not only of west Texans, but all Americans. I am doing that with my neighbor and strong leader of the Ag Committee, MIKE CONAWAY.

As we craft the next farm bill, there are a few priorities that, if achieved, will put our United States farmers and ranchers, and our country as a whole, in the strongest competitive position.

The first is that we must maintain America's food and fiber independence from other countries, which, like energy independence, is a national security imperative.

To achieve this objective, we must maintain a viable and responsible safety net for all commodities, which means the committee must work in a bipartisan way to get cotton back in under title I of the farm bill.

We can never again let the World Trade Organization dictate agriculture policy to the United States.

Addressing the gaping hole in the current agriculture safety net for cotton and fixing other shortfalls and risk management for both crops and livestock will ensure a strong, viable agriculture sector for the United States and rural America.

Ultimately, we must maintain appropriate programs to mitigate against unforeseen global market changes and commodity prices, ensure against adverse weather events, and maintain access to credit so farmers across the country can continue to supply America with abundant and affordable sources of food.

Additionally, as Texas is the top cattle-producing State in the Nation and represents \$80 billion in annual cash receipts nationwide, maintaining key livestock disaster programs are equally important to a responsible and effective safety net for our ag producers.

Second, our rural communities need greater access to broadband communications to be viable in the modern era. Increasing access to broadband is fundamental to the survival of rural America. It is necessary to support critical infrastructure, such as healthcare and education, and for overall economic sustainability so that we can finally close the digital divide between rural and urban America.

Let me put it to you this way: no rural America; no food, fuel, and fiber for the American people.

Third, we need another generation of farmers and ranchers. The American agriculturist is facing tough times. The average age of a farmer is nearly 60 and the number of people involved in ag production in their thirties and forties continues to decrease dramatically, with less than 1 percent of the American population involved in ag production. The math doesn't look promising.

Operating expenses continue to rise and farmers, particularly the young ones, have less equity to finance their operations. Farmers of all ages need a dependable and flexible operating loan structure with loan amounts that are useful. We must work to ensure that the USDA has the flexibility it needs to extend credit in the most meaningful way.

Fourth, innovation makes it possible for the farmer and rancher to continue to operate. Ensuring adequate and equitable research funding for agriculture colleges across the country is key.

Let's not just pour all of our money into land-grant institutions just because they are land-grant institutions. Let's fund the best ideas. It is call meritocracy. That is what our country was founded on.

As former vice chancellor of research at Texas Tech University, I saw some of the best and most innovative ideas spawned from research go to market and make a difference for our economy and the quality of our lives.

Lastly, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program needs a more focused accountability. As we craft the

next farm bill, we should continue to monitor the effectiveness of all programs, especially SNAP, which accounts for 80 percent of all spending in the farm bill.

While the intent is well-meaning, the unintended consequence is an increase of recipients who are work-capable adults without dependents, accounting for nearly 30 percent of all recipients. It is imperative to require that able-bodied adults work in order to receive government assistance not just in SNAP, but all government programs.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, our farmers and ranchers are central to the vitality and security of this great Nation. This legislation is extremely critical to the success of our farmers. By including the priorities I have outlined today in the next farm bill, we can ensure a safer, stronger, freer America for our children.

TAX REFORM

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of efforts to simplify our outdated and overly complex Tax Code in order to make our economy more competitive and to provide big tax cuts to hardworking American families.

Last night, the House voted to go to conference with the Senate to work out differences between our two versions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I am confident the conference committee will report a reconciled bill capable of passing both Chambers, because the American people need and deserve tax relief.

Make no mistake: no matter what the tired talking points are on the other side of the aisle, this legislation will be a tremendous benefit to middle- and lower-income Americans who have been hit hardest by the policies of the previous administration. This is a massive victory for low- and middle-income Americans.

But don't just take it from me. Let's review the facts.

The House bill takes the lowest 10 percent tax bracket to zero, and it doubles the standard deduction, meaning hardworking Americans can immediately take home more of their paychecks. Specifically, the first \$24,000 of family income will be completely tax free under this plan.

We are nearly doubling the child tax credit. The changes to all tax brackets means we are lowering taxes for low- and middle-income taxpayers even as we simplify the Tax Code and broaden the base.

□ 1045

A study by the nonpartisan Tax Foundation found that, in Kentucky, this legislation will create 11,782 new full-time jobs and will increase take-home pay by \$1,724 by Kentucky households making the median income.

Not only will middle-income families be able to keep more of their paychecks, their paychecks will grow.

A letter signed by 137 economists last week, sent to all Members of the House and Senate, made the case that "a competitive corporate rate is the key to an economic engine driven by greater investment, capital stock, business formation, and productivity—all of which will yield more jobs and higher wages."

That is why these economists are urging us to make the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act law. They note that our current corporate tax rate of 35 percent, which is the highest in the industrialized world, has made America non-competitive, resulting in the loss of 4,700 companies to overseas competitors since 2004, lost jobs, and lost wages.

This analysis is confirmed by the Tax Foundation, which concludes that approximately 74 percent of corporate taxes are paid by workers in the form of lower wages. Let's give American workers a pay raise.

Reducing the corporate tax rate will ignite economic growth, allow jobs to return from overseas, increase new private sector jobs through greater investment, and increase paychecks. A win-win-win-win for middle class workers and those looking to get ahead.

Now, the ultimate irony is that if you actually wanted to help the wealthy and the well-connected, then you would vote against tax reform and you would keep the current Tax Code in place. It is a complicated mess of multiple brackets, high rates, and special interest loopholes. The Code is a haven for special interests, tax manipulators, and the well-connected. It is an impossible frustration for ordinary middle class Americans who need to comply with the Code to hire tax lawyers and accountants. So if you want to help the middle class, get rid of this complicated mess.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to respond to my friends on the other side of the aisle who after more than doubling the national debt during the Obama administration and who continue to push massive unpaid increases in spending, such as single-payer healthcare—government-run healthcare—have suddenly become gravely concerned about our national deficit and debt.

Now, let me be clear: I welcome this epiphany. I welcome their change of heart. I hope we can work together to actually address the true cost drivers of our deficit and debt. But last year, the Federal Government took in \$3.3 trillion in revenue. Our deficits are not the result of too little revenue. They are the result of Members of Congress who are unwilling to force the government to live within its means. We will never balance the budget or even think about paying down our debt without robust economic growth.

Those on the other side assume that a \$1.5 trillion tax cut will increase the debt by \$1.5 trillion. But that is based on the absurd assumption that nobody changes behavior when you get a tax

cut. It is based on the assumption that the economy is fixed. They are wrong because they don't account for the extra revenue that tax reform will generate by creating more taxpayers and higher paychecks.

As was noted by an analysis by the American Enterprise Institute and U.S. Policy Metrics: "If the economy grows an average of 2.6 percent, the Republican tax reform bill would not raise the deficit. If the economy grows faster than 2.6 percent, the deficit would actually fall."

It should be noted that in the last two consecutive quarters, the U.S. economy has grown at an annual rate of 3 percent or more. That is, in part, due to the increased confidence by businesses, consumers, investors, and entrepreneurs that we will indeed make good on our promise to complete tax reform this year.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues concerned about the deficit and the debt to join me in supporting the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act when this bill returns to the House floor so that we can ignite economic growth, create new jobs, and give American workers the pay increase that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, it is their money. Let's give it back to them.

RECOGNIZING STEVE HOGG

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, December is a special month. We celebrate the birth of Christ, but we are also celebrating a church in Rock Hill, South Carolina, that has done amazing things. It is a 30-year celebration for the First Baptist Church in Rock Hill, South Carolina. It is also celebrating a pastor that has stood the test of time. He has done amazing things at this church.

Let me tell you what has occurred over the past 30 years.

The church relocated in April 2004 to an 84,000-square-foot facility. It was 52 acres of land. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, when the First Baptist Church made that move, the land out there was a forest. You didn't see the shopping centers, you didn't see the fast food, you didn't see the service stations and the clothing stores that are there now. They took a chance on faith.

I remember when the board took that vote, it wasn't a simple majority. They had to have an 80 percent-plus in agreement of the board to locate there. If that is not democracy, I don't know what is.

The budget was \$490,000. It increased \$2,637,800.

They have had over 1,500 baptisms.

They sponsored the first African-American congregation for membership in the York Baptist Association in 1994.

They sponsored a second African-American congregation for member-

ship in the York Baptist Association in 2017.

Let me tell you about Pastor Hogg.

Pastor Hogg was born on January 14, 1958. He was born in Roxana, Kentucky. He was baptized and ordained in the First Baptist Church of Whitesburg, Kentucky. He has been pastor of the Bethel Baptist Church. He has been pastor of the Colson Baptist Mission. He has been the summer missionary at the First Baptist Church. And he has been the bus minister at the First Baptist Church in Kentucky.

Some of the honors and offices that he has devoted his time and talent to have been the South Carolina Baptist Convention, where he was president from 1993 to 1994. He was president of the Pastor's Conference. He was chairman of the United Christian Baccalaureate Planning Committee. He was on the Billy Graham Carolinas Crusade Executive Committee. He was a charter member of the city of Rock Hill No Room for Racism Committee.

Some of the new things he has started while at First Baptist Church in Rock Hill were the contemporary worship service, deaf ministry, women and men's ministries, television broadcasts of morning worship services, live streaming of worship services, Sunbeams Day School, and conducted eight capital fund campaigns.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but these 30 years are something to remember. It is something that ought to be a milestone for the church—and it is. If anybody has stood the test of time, it has been Steve Hogg and the First Baptist Church, and I commend the congregation. It is a great day for our State and it is a great day for America. God bless America.

CUBA AND BOLIVIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARR). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, a human rights activist in my native homeland of Cuba, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez, better known as Antunez, was detained in Cuba on his way to the airport. Antunez was going to speak at an event hosted by Freedom House and Justice Cuba, right here in D.C., to educate the public on the brutal realities of what continues to occur every day in Cuba.

But, instead, Raúl Castro sent his thugs to detain Antunez and prevent him from boarding the plane. The regime promised Antunez that he could travel if he only "tempered his activism."

Mr. Speaker, anyone who knows Antunez, who spent many a year in Castro's jails, knows that he will not abandon his principles, nor should he ever be forced to do so.

As Antunez always says, "Ni me callo, ni me voy," which means, "I won't stay silent and I won't leave." He is talking about his activism in Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, the Castro regime wants to paint a picture that people on the island are free, that human rights abuses do not exist in Cuba, but we know better. That is why there continues to be, every day, arbitrary arrests and beatings to stop dissidents and activists from speaking out—that is the menu every day—reminding the world that what these activists want is freedom. That is really what transpires in Castro's Cuba for dissidents.

Our message to those brave fighters for freedom in Cuba must be that we are listening to their plight, that we will stand with them in opposing Castro's evil rule, and that we have not forgotten about them or their continued fight for freedom and democracy.

So I urge this administration to continue to undo the damage done by the previous administration and their failed policy toward Cuba. I urge the administration to offer unequivocal support for the brave Cuban people, like Antunez. They deserve our unwavering support, and they deserve our solidarity so that the people of Cuba achieve what they have been seeking for decades, and it is simple, Mr. Speaker: freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, respect for the rule of law, free and open markets, and liberty from communism.

Mr. Speaker, in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, leftist dictators refuse to follow the rule of law, circumventing or ignoring completely their constitutions in order to maintain their hold in power. This practice has now spread to Bolivia, where strongman Evo Morales is taking a page from this playbook.

Less than 2 years ago, in 2016, Morales imposed a constitutional referendum to eliminate term limits for Presidents so that he could run for a third term.

But what happened in Bolivia?

The majority of the people said no. They went to the ballot box and they rejected this by a vote through a referendum.

What did Morales do?

He went to the court system that he has already rigged in his favor to seek the outcome that he desired. And, sure enough, his spineless cronies granted him his wish and approved his illegitimate run for a fourth term, agreeing that it was his human right—the only right, apparently, that is respected in Bolivia—to run for another term, ignoring completely the human rights of millions who voted to uphold their laws under their constitution.

The court's decision last week to lift constitutional limits on reelection should be disturbing to all of us and should serve as a wake-up call throughout the hemisphere. If we don't pay attention to Bolivia, it will soon become another Cuba or another Venezuela—failed states.

The decision to allow Morales to run for yet another term further erodes the democratic institutions in that country.

Sadly, this was not the first time that Morales or his thugs have chipped

away at Bolivia's democratic foundations in order to remain in power. In 2013, the constitutional court allowed him to run for a third term, stating that his first term didn't count—do-over, mulligan—because it occurred before the 2009 constitution took effect. What a farce.

This was obviously a cynical, political ploy, and should have served as the harbinger of worse things to come for Bolivia, and indeed it was, not to mention the ruling falls outside of the court's mandate to interpret and evaluate compliance with the constitution.

Responsible nations in our hemisphere, Mr. Speaker, must not remain silent, nor should this esteemed body. We must speak out in the support of the people of Bolivia to democratically elect their next leader.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Bolivian people before there is another crisis of democracy right in our hemisphere.

RETIREMENT OF DEAN OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago, in Detroit, the dean of the United States Congress offered his retirement immediately. He has asked me, a member of the Judiciary Committee, to offer his words to his colleagues and to put his statement in the RECORD that indicates that he has notified Speaker RYAN, Leader PELOSI, and Governor Snyder of his retirement from the United States House of Representatives.

It is important to note, as I begin, that there is no difference or no undermining of the rights of women and the abhorrence of sexual harassment and sexual assault. But this is a statement that I believe should be read on behalf of the dean of the United States Congress, Mr. JOHN CONYERS.

□ 1100

As a Member of Congress, I have known Mr. CONYERS to not shy away from a legislative challenge. In addition to being the first Member to introduce the Martin Luther King holiday bill, he was the first to hold hearings on police misconduct, the first to examine the problem of solitary confinement, the first to offer racial profiling legislation, the first to introduce legislation protecting against disenfranchisement of ex-felons, and the first to pursue legislation protecting Black farmers from discrimination, among many other civil rights measures.

In 2007, Representative CONYERS stood up for the prerogatives of the House of Representatives and successfully brought a suit against the former President Bush White House for failing to comply with subpoenas relating to a U.S. attorney's investigation.

He has been the chairman of the Judiciary Committee; and he will con-

tinue to, in his life, as he has indicated, stand for what is right.

It is now my privilege to read this statement from Mr. JOHN CONYERS. I reiterate that he says that he notified Speaker RYAN, Leader PELOSI, and Governor Snyder of his retirement from the United States House of Representatives.

It was his honor—these are his words—and his privilege to serve the constituents of Detroit, Michigan, as their United States Congressman in the 13th and 14th Congressional District for 53 years.

This is his statement again:

I came to Congress in 1964. Since then, I have devoted my entire career to improving the lives of my constituents in Detroit and on the behalf of justice everywhere. These years witnessed a profound evolution in civil rights, led by millions in the streets who marched for justice and people of conscience in the Congress—both Democrats and Republicans—who heard them and enacted the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and other landmark reforms. I have been in the forefront of the civil rights movement. I have been a champion of justice for the oppressed and the disenfranchised. I never wavered in my commitment to justice and democracy.

I am proud to have been part of that rich history. I have been privileged to be a founder of the Congressional Black Caucus and to represent the United States Congress by being dean.

I passed, as indicated, the law dealing with the Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Act, the Violence Against Women Act, the Hate Crimes Act, the USA Freedom Act, and the extension of the Voting Rights Act. I have led the fight against mandatory minimum sentences, hoping to reverse the devastating incarceration rates for African Americans and poor people. I have tried to pass a universal healthcare law, H.R. 676. Every Congress since 1989, I have introduced H.R. 40 to study reparations for slavery, and I deeply appreciate those handful of courageous colleagues who have joined me.

For Detroiters, I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish to bring hundreds of millions of dollars in critical grants and Federal funding for southeast Michigan to revitalize our great city, attract rich talent, and return to us prosperity.

I recognize that in this present environment, due process will not be afforded to me. I was taught by a great woman, my mother, to honor women. The first employee I ever hired was Mrs. Rosa Parks, who worked in my office for 22 years. It has been my great honor to work alongside some of the most talented and honorable staff on Capitol Hill and in Detroit.

I have stated my position on these allegations. I have worked with both women and men.

Given the totality of the circumstance of not being afforded the right of due process in conjunction with my current health condition, and to preserve my legacy and good name, I am retiring.

I hope that my retirement will be viewed in the larger perspective of my record of service, and as I enter a new chapter, I pledge to continue my commitment to a progressive vision and a better future for this country that I love. I owe that to the legacy of my father, John Conyers, Sr., who integrated labor unions in this country; to my brother Nathan, who integrated business, and he is my "main man;" and to my loving wife, Monica; and to my son, John III, who I

believe offers hope to this generation of leadership, and who is committed to being an advocate of fairness and justice for all; and to Carl Edward, who never leaves my side.

I cannot allow the great work of this body to be distracted from the important work, or the goals of the Democratic Party to be distracted. It has been an honor and a privilege of my life to represent the people of Michigan in the House of Representatives, but that responsibility will now fall to my colleagues and my successor. They have my deepest support and prayers. Jobs, justice, and peace.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 4 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

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

Once again we come to ask wisdom, patience, peace, and understanding for the Members of this people's House.

Give them the generosity of heart and the courage of true leadership to work toward a common solution to the many issues facing our Nation.

As true statesmen and women, may they find the fortitude to make judgments that benefit all Americans in their time of need.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) come forward

and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HURD led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

HONORING THE LATE CHIEF JUSTICE EARNEST A. FINNEY, JR.

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, sadly, South Carolina lost a trailblazer with the death, Sunday, of Chief Justice Ernest A. Finney, Jr.

Justice Finney started his storied career in public service as an educator and then went on to become a renowned civil rights attorney and was South Carolina's first African-American chief justice since Reconstruction.

My first judicial commitment as a State senator was for Justice Finney, after meeting him with former Congressman John Napier, who had been my classmate in law school.

A graduate of Claflin University and South Carolina State University School of Law, the justice was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1972. As a member of the house, he made history as a founder of the Legislative Black Caucus. He served as the first caucus chairman.

In 1976, the justice was elected the first African-American circuit court judge. In 1985, he became the State's first African-American supreme court justice since Reconstruction. Justice Finney became chief justice in 1994.

South Carolina is grateful for the life and service of Justice Finney. We lift up his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remind every American that the window to purchase health insurance on healthcare.gov will close in 10 days. I encourage anyone who doesn't get insurance through a job or government program to apply before December 15.

Financial assistance is available, and the Department of Health and Human Services has said before that 8 out of 10 consumers qualify for a plan that costs less than \$75 a month.

Although the sign-up period was cut in half by the Trump administration, nearly 2.8 million people have already enrolled so far this year compared to 2.1 million this time last year. That is an increase of 33 percent, and this doesn't include numbers from States that have their own exchange.

Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Care Act is still the law of the land, and I urge my Republican colleagues not to harm the ACA by including provisions in the tax bill and, instead, work with Democrats to improve the law.

Millions of Americans depend on us to do the right thing, Mr. Speaker.

WORLD SOIL DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on World Soil Day to highlight the importance of soil quality for our food security, healthy ecosystems, and overall well-being.

As vice chair of the House Agriculture Committee and chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, I know firsthand the importance of good management practices to keep this essential resource healthy.

This year's theme is "caring for the planet starts from the ground." Globally, 815 million people are food insecure and 2 billion people are nutritionally insecure, but we can mitigate this through soil health.

Mr. Speaker, 95 percent of our food comes from soil. Soil is a finite resource, and on a human scale, it is non-renewable. However, despite the essential role that soil plays in human livelihood, there is a worldwide increase in the degradation of soil resources due to inappropriate management practices, population pressure driving unsustainable intensification, and inadequate governance over this essential resource.

World Soil Day 2017 aims to raise awareness of the importance of sustaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the increasing challenges in soil management. Today we encourage people around the world to engage in proactively improving soil health.

Happy World Soil Day.

BIRTH CONTROL RULE

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today against the Trump administration rule allowing corporations to decide whether their employees can access birth control. This morning, 500,000 comments were delivered in opposition to this rule.

It is astonishing to me that we are having this debate in 2017: women's access to birth control.

Birth control is not healthcare alone. It is the right of women to control

their own bodies, plan their own families, and chart their own futures.

Obstetricians and gynecologists from Chicago submitted a comment, saying: "Women who are able to control when and how they become pregnant are able to finish school, pursue graduate degrees, and further the greater social and economic good of our Nation."

Mr. Speaker, for 99 percent of women of reproductive age, birth control is an essential part of their lives. This is a direct attack on women, and we will not stand for it. Women in America are watching.

TEXAS OFFICER DOWN: SAN MARCOS POLICE OFFICER KENNETH COPELAND

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon, 58-year-old San Marcos, Texas, Police Officer Kenneth Copeland was shot in an ambush-style attack while he was serving an arrest warrant for a violent crime.

The 19-year veteran of the force was working on his day off doing what he loved: protecting and serving the community. This wasn't unusual for Officer Copeland. A father of four, he worked just about every day simply to provide for his family and help the shorthanded department out.

As guns blazed around them, fellow officers sprang into action loading Copeland into a patrol car and rushed him to the hospital with their sirens blazing. But it was too late. Another member of the thin blue line murdered simply because he wore the badge.

Mr. Speaker, this is the sixth peace officer in Texas murdered this year, the first in San Marcos history. We must do everything in our power to stand by our men and women in uniform who wear the badge. Peace officers like Copeland are the last strand of wire in the fence between the law and the outlaws.

We mourn his sacrifice, but we thank the good Lord that such a man as Officer Copeland ever lived.

And that is just the way it is.

WELCOMING USS "LITTLE ROCK" TO BUFFALO, NEW YORK

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize and welcome the newly constructed naval ship, the USS *Little Rock*, to my home city of Buffalo, New York, where it will be docked until its formal commissioning on December 16.

For the first time in the history of the United States Navy, the commissioning of the new USS *Little Rock* will take place alongside the original USS *Little Rock*, which served during the Second World War and for the last 40 years has stood tall as an honored exhibit at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to thank the brave men and women of the United States Navy and crew of the USS *Little Rock*, past and present, for their service.

On behalf of Buffalo and western New York, it is an honor and a privilege to serve as the site from which the USS *Little Rock* will embark on its next mission.

This new vessel will make a formidable addition to the United States Navy fleet, and its dedicated crew, tasked with protecting our Nation's coasts and waterways, will ensure the ship lives up to its motto: "Back with a Vengeance."

ROHINGYA CRISIS

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

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, many decades ago, we swore it wouldn't happen again, yet it happened in Rwanda in 1990, in Bosnia in 1995, Darfur in 2003, and it is happening right now in Burma. The word is "genocide."

It is unclear how many Rohingya men, women, and children have been lost to violent beatings, arson, and indiscriminate firings because the government is refusing access to human rights investigators. What we do know is that, since August, over 600,000 Rohingya civilians have fled to neighboring Bangladesh to escape systematic persecution, mass rape, killings, and disappearances committed by the Burmese military. These are crimes against humanity and the very definition of ethnic cleansing.

There is no place for genocide in 2017. The international community needs to increase the humanitarian access to Rohingya.

In addition, we must consider the crisis from a national security perspective. Not only are the squalid refugee camps teeming with contamination and disease, but the mass exodus and horrible conditions are a breeding ground for terrorist recruitment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

CONCEALED CARRY RECIPROCITY

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, this year we are again experiencing terrible gun violence that destroys lives, tears apart families, devastates communities, and is leaving a stain on our Nation.

Sadly, after thousands of senseless deaths, after Sandy Hook, after the Pulse nightclub, after Las Vegas, and after so many more, this body has taken no action, just the now tragically routine moments of silence and then back to business as usual.

But this week Congress will, in fact, take action, action making it easier for

dangerous people to carry concealed guns throughout the country. It is inconceivable to me that this bill is what comes to the floor from the debate about gun safety.

Concealed carry reciprocity allows people from States with the loosest safety standards or no safety standards at all to carry a firearm across the country irrespective of local laws.

I will give one example. In my State of Illinois, people who have two DUIs within 5 years cannot get a concealed carry permit. But this bill would override our State law, rendering our and every other State legislature virtually helpless to protect their own citizens.

I rise today in strong opposition to the reckless and dangerous concealed carry reciprocity bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

SUPPORTING CONCEALED CARRY RECIPROCITY ACT

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

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act.

The constitutional rights of law-abiding gun owners in my north Texas district do not end when they cross State lines. The Second Amendment protects the right of my constituents—and of all Texans and people throughout our country—to keep and bear arms.

This week the House will vote on legislation allowing gun owners with a State-issued concealed carry license to freely travel between State lines.

Many States already acknowledge the concealed carry permit of another State. The Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act simply ensures the rights of private citizens be upheld regardless of the State that they are in.

I cosponsored this legislation, and I will continue to stand up for it. I urge the passage of this bill that will protect our constitutional rights.

□ 1215

NEW RULE

(Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to suggest a new rule.

All my life, I have heard the Republican Party preach family values and fiscal discipline, but in the course of a single week, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the Republican Party in this House vote to add more than \$1 trillion of new debt because tax cuts for rich people matter more. We have seen the Republican President and the Republican Party in the Senate choose to support a credibly accused pedophile because power matters more.

So, I will tell you what, Mr. Speaker, new rule: After today, the Republican

Party can choose to support massive new debts and politicians who abuse kids, but it cannot lecture the rest of us about it. The rest of us have listened to our last lecture from Republicans about family values or fiscal discipline. From now on, that party has no credibility on either issue.

So I will tell you what. When it comes to family values or fiscal responsibility, please keep it to yourselves. We have heard enough of it.

SUE STIVERS DAY

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Ms. Sue Stivers of Columbia in the First District of Kentucky.

Heralded as the "matriarch of Adair County," Sue has been an outstanding contributor to the livability and prosperity of her hometown. Her extensive involvement in working to better her fellow citizens' lives through her decades of experience with the Cooperative Extension Service is a testament to her steadfast dedication to a life of serving others.

She has not only helped local businesses to thrive during her tenure as executive director of the Columbia-Adair County Chamber of Commerce, but has also been extensively involved in one of the main components of life in Columbia, Kentucky: Lindsey Wilson College.

An honorary alumnus and a longtime member of the board of trustees, Sue has continually pursued means of giving back to her community and, as a result of her positions, has had an influence on individuals from across the Commonwealth, country, and globe.

I am honored to recognize Sue for her tireless service as she has continually made Columbia and Adair County "a great place to call home."

RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS

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

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, the chief reason the "American experiment" in liberty and democracy has been so successful is our belief in God-given, inalienable rights. One of these fundamental freedoms is an individual's right to "keep and bear arms."

While the original intent of the Second Amendment to the Constitution was the defense against an abusive, tyrannical government, the central principle is to empower Americans to protect themselves, their families, and, as we witnessed in the Sutherland Springs shooting, their communities.

Statistics show annual reductions in murder rates as concealed carry laws have gone into effect and that violent crime has decreased as gun ownership has increased. In fact, according to Gun Owners of America, citizens defend

themselves with lethal force against criminals twice as often as police do every year.

The Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act, which I cosponsored, simply allows law-abiding citizens who are licensed to carry a firearm the freedom to travel between States, closes gaps and strengthens due process regarding our national criminal background check system, and maintains the reasonable prohibitions that are in place today, like keeping guns out of the hands of convicted felons.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

CHANGE PALESTINIAN PAY-TO-SLAY POLICY

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Taylor Force Act, offered by my colleague from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN). This bill is named after Taylor Force, who was killed in Tel Aviv last year by a Palestinian terrorist wielding a knife.

As part of the Palestinian Authority's "pay-to-slay" policy in which families of terrorists are rewarded for murdering Americans and Israelis, relatives of Force's killer now receive a \$400 monthly stipend. The average monthly income for Palestinians in the West Bank is only \$150. This policy doubles, or even triples, a family's earnings overnight.

This policy directly encourages terrorism and incentivizes the murder of Americans and our allies. Payments to families of terrorists have reached \$355 million in 2017. The Taylor Force Act ceases any continued U.S. aid to Palestinian interests until these so-called martyr payments are permanently ceased.

The U.S. currently sends \$300 million in aid to Palestinian interests. We shouldn't send a penny more until this heinous policy is abolished for good.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

SECRET SERVICE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3731) to provide overtime pay for employees of the United States Secret Service, and for other purposes, as amended.

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

H.R. 3731

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF OVERTIME PAY EXCEPTION THROUGH 2018 FOR PROTECTIVE SERVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Overtime Pay for Protective Services Act of 2016 (5 U.S.C. 5547 note) is amended—

(1) in the section heading for section 2, by striking "2016" and inserting "2016 THROUGH 2018"; and

(2) by striking "during 2016" each place it appears and inserting "during 2016 through 2018".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect as if enacted on December 31, 2016.

(c) REPORT ON EXTENSIONS.—Not later than January 30, 2018, and January 30, 2019, the Director of the Secret Service shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the effects of the amendment made by subsection (a)(2). The report shall include, with respect to the previous calendar year—

(1) the total number of United States Secret Service personnel receiving premium pay above the premium pay limitation in subsection (a) of section 5547 of title 5, United States Code;

(2) the total amount of premium pay for that calendar year paid to United States Secret Service personnel above the premium pay limitation in such subsection;

(3) the mean and median amount of premium pay paid to United States Secret Service personnel above the premium pay limitation in such subsection;

(4) the greatest amount paid to United States Secret Service personnel above the premium pay limitation in such subsection and the number of employees who received that amount;

(5) notwithstanding the amendments made by subsection (a), the total number of United States Secret Service personnel who were not fully compensated for service because of the premium pay earnings limitation in section 118 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2001 (5 U.S.C. 5547 note);

(6) the total amount of premium pay United States Secret Service personnel would have been paid but for the premium pay earnings limitation in such section; and

(7) a list of United States Secret Service personnel who, within the calendar year, received premium pay above the premium pay limitation in subsection (a) of section 5547 of title 5, United States Code, and separated from the agency, including the type of separation in each case.

SEC. 3. REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES.

Not later than 1 year after the effective date of this section, the Comptroller General of the United States shall complete a study and submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the extent of the progress made by the United States Secret Service in im-

plementing the recommendations of the United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel, including in particular those items pertaining to training and personnel enumerated in the Executive Summary to Report from the United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel to the Secretary of Homeland Security dated December 15, 2014.

SEC. 4. RESCISSIONS.

(a) RESCISSION OF UNOBLIGATED BALANCES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ASSETS FORFEITURE FUND.—Of the unobligated balances available under the Department of Justice Assets Forfeiture Fund, \$10,000,000 is hereby permanently rescinded.

(b) AUTHORIZATION TO RESCIND FUTURE UNOBLIGATED BALANCES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ASSETS FORFEITURE FUND.—There is authorized to be rescinded from the unobligated balances available under the Department of Justice Assets Forfeiture Fund \$7,000,000 in fiscal year 2018 and \$3,000,000 in fiscal year 2019.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

□ 1230

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3731, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3731, the Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2017.

This bipartisan legislation was introduced by my distinguished colleague, Mr. KATKO, and negotiated between the House Judiciary Committee and the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. It would make small, but significant, changes to the Federal law to ensure that the men and women of the United States Secret Service are fairly compensated for performing their duties.

This bill is necessary because, under current law, many Secret Service agents have hit the lawful cap that restricts overtime pay in some circumstances. This means that the brave men and women standing post, for example, at 2 a.m. in the morning are doing so for free. This is, without question, an untenable situation.

H.R. 3731 makes two important changes to the law to address this problem.

First, it raises the overtime cap to ensure that these agents are paid.

Second, it includes a reporting requirement, directing the Government Accountability Office to study the

Service's implementation of the recommendations of the Protective Mission Panel, or PMP. This change is intended to help address the recruitment and retention issues at the Secret Service.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will ensure that the Secret Service is able to recruit and retain an elite group of dedicated law enforcement officers. This is an issue that rises above party affiliation, or ideology. The protection of the President, the First Family, and others is something that, obviously, we all should want as American citizens.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me, first of all, thank my good friend, Mr. KATKO, who is the original sponsor; and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation. We serve on the Homeland Security Committee and have oversight over the Secret Service, as does the aspects of this legislation, as relates to Judiciary has oversight as well. So ensuring that our men and women, who put their lives on the line daily, are protected is an important initiative. As I said earlier, I am proud to be an original cosponsor, along with my colleague from New York (Mr. KATKO).

The Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2017 is intended to provide overtime pay for employees of the United States Secret Service. Currently, the premium pay for protective services, under the Overtime Pay for Protective Services Act of 2016, has severe earning limitations, or otherwise caps, which many of these men and women have reached.

Due to earnings limitations put in place through 5 U.S.C. 5547, many Secret Service employees are not receiving timely or full payment for the hours they work. The requirements of protective operations directly contrast with the intent of an annual pay cap, as the protective mission requires continued, uninterrupted coverage for our protectees, beyond the control of the Secret Service. I think that is an important point.

And I want my colleagues to know that I wholly support that our protectees are protected wherever they go. But I would be remiss if I did not express my concern on the number of trips that the Secret Service today has had to make on outings for entertainment, Mar-a-Lago, which I think is over 100 times, and the enormous amount of money and burden that is being placed on the Federal Government.

This does not mean that I do not want these individuals to be compensated. And might I stop for a moment to thank the Secret Service, who I have known and have seen working over the years that I have served in the United States Congress in many different ways. Let me personally thank

them for their service and for their professional service, dedicated service, and longstanding service and commitment to sacrificing their life for their protectee.

I would say that this problem often requires individuals to work over the amount of premium pay, for which they are able to be legally paid, due to the annual cap. We have seen the extent to which Secret Service members are stretched in this administration alone. Providing protection for the President, his family members, and other high officials requires depth within the agency to ensure protectees are covered as well as their respective posts when pulled away. As I made the point, these various family members and President go in many ways off of the path of their government service related to the people of the United States.

It is my hope that we are able to eventually work collaboratively on a more permanent fix to this problem since the Secret Service cannot administratively control protective overtime, which is dependent on the schedules of the protectees. Raising the pay cap will aid the Secret Service in reducing attrition rates and retaining personnel, which is what this bill purports to do. I truly want to make sure that happens.

Exit interview data indicates the pay cap issue is the number one concern among employees leaving the Secret Service. We must ensure that we are employing the best available candidates when dealing with the protection of America's highest diplomats. Therefore, pay should not be a deterrence in the recruitment and/or retention of Secret Service agents, and it is crucial that we retain them.

Departing employees said raising the pay cap would have had an effect on their decision to leave, and they would have stayed. They are leaving the Secret Service for other positions in the Federal Government with equal pay and less travel.

The U.S. Secret Service is currently protecting a historic number of protectees—about 25 percent more protectees—than during the Obama administration. In comparison to the previous five Presidential administrations—Bush 41 to Obama—for the first 6 months in office, Trump administration Secret Service protectees had more travel stops and travel days than any other President.

As such, the operational tempo for protective activities have remained higher than normal. Protective overtime hours for special agents are about 15 to 20 percent higher when compared to CY 2015, the last non-Presidential campaign year.

For CY 2017, as of 9-30-17, the Secret Service anticipates approximately 1,200 personnel will exceed the statutory pay cap.

The costs related to protective overtime in excess of the pay cap for CY 2017 is estimated at \$10.5 million. The

same costs are projected for 2018, if the protective tempo remains unchanged.

I, therefore, support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Any way that we can help protect the protectees, and keep these well-experienced, committed, dedicated agents, willing to sacrifice their lives, from leaving, so that we can also recruit, is a vital step forward. I hope not only is this bill passed by the House, but I also hope passed quickly by the Senate to be able to be signed by the President of the United States.

Ensuring that our men and women, who put their lives on the line daily, are protected is an important initiative. I am proud to be an original co-sponsor along with my colleague Mr. KATKO from New York.

"The Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2017" is intended to provide overtime pay for employees of the United States Secret Service.

Currently, the premium pay for protective services under the "Overtime Pay for Protective Services Act of 2016" has severe earning limitations, or otherwise caps, which many of these men and women have reached.

Due to earnings limitations put in place through 5 U.S.C. 5547, many Secret Service employees are not receiving timely or full payment for the hours they work.

The requirements of protective operations directly contrast with the intent of an annual pay cap, as the protective mission requires continued, uninterrupted coverage for our protectees, beyond the control of the United States Secret Service.

This often requires individuals to work over the amount of premium pay for which they are able to be legally paid due to the annual cap.

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The costs related to protective overtime in excess of the pay cap for CY 2017 is estimated at \$10.5 million. The same costs are projected for CY 2018, if the protective tempo remains unchanged.

I therefore, support this bill and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, we must do everything we can to protect our United States Secret Service personnel and ensure an effective process for recruitment and retention of these agents.

These agents play a vital role in our democratic system both here at home and abroad. Their keen attention to details and adequate response to dangerous situations around the world cannot be measured in dollar signs.

Beyond protecting the President, Vice-President, their families and other identified individuals, the Secret Service plays a vital role in representing the United States interest around the world through criminal investigation activities that span the gamut from anti-counterfeiting operations to now encompassing financial crimes, identity theft, counterfeiting, computer fraud, and computer-based attacks on the nation's financial, banking, and telecommunications infrastructure, among other areas.

For all these reasons, I therefore, support this bill.

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

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO), my good friend, and sponsor of the bill.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3731, the Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2017, because I believe in the need to pay the hardworking men and women of the United States Secret Service for the critical work that they perform in dedication to the security of America's leaders.

While most Americans know the Secret Service for its role in protecting the President and First Family, many are unaware of the additional substantial roles and countless hours worked by special agents, uniformed division officers, technical personnel, and intelligence professionals. These jobs require extensive travel, often on short notice, as well as sometimes working multiple weeks in a row without a day off, because the security of our Nation's leaders depend on our constant vigilance.

This legislation demonstrates an important recognition of the men and women who wake up every day to dedicate their lives to the protection of America's leadership and financial systems. This agency has struggled to improve employee morale in recent years, due, in large part, to strict overtime pay caps that prevent adequate compensation for their work. It is very

common, nowadays, in the Secret Service for agents, starting as early as June, to be working multiple hours a week of overtime, and sometimes as many as over 100 hours a month for free because they have reached the cap.

This, in turn, leads to challenges in retention and recruitment, further exacerbating staffing shortages. In 2017, the agency estimates that 1,200 employees at Secret Service will exceed the statutory pay cap, losing approximately \$10 million in overtime pay, unless we, in Congress, step up.

I wish to thank each of the bipartisan cosponsors for their support of this bill, which took the cooperation of multiple committees to bring to the floor. And I want to thank my colleague, Ms. JACKSON LEE, for her continued support on bipartisan measures. It is a sign that when you join hands across the aisle, good things can happen.

In particular, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE of the Judiciary Committee for bringing this legislation up today, as well as Chairman GOWDY and Ranking Member CUMMINGS of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee for their support. I also thank my colleague, Mr. RUTHERFORD, for managing this bill on the floor today. And I thank Chairman MCCAUL, Ranking Member THOMPSON, and Ranking Member WATSON COLEMAN of the Homeland Security Committee for their recognition of this legislation's importance to the Secret Service and for their support.

Further, I would like to explicitly thank two staffers who were truly instrumental in coordinating the movement of this bill: Kevin Ortiz of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and Robert Parmiter of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides overdue relief to an agency whose dedication knows no bounds. As we enjoy this holiday season, I can think of no better Christmas gift to the hardworking men and women at the Secret Service than the fair compensation that is owed to them for their hard work in securing our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, for this reason, I strongly urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I urge the Senate to quickly take up and pass this bill.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3731. This bill would raise the cap on overtime pay for Secret Service agents through next year.

These agents pursue the unique dual role of the Secret Service, which consists of protective and investigative functions. Secret Service agents are most commonly known for their role in protecting the President, Vice President, their families, and other dig-

nitaries. Their duties, however, also involve rotations into units that investigate threats against our financial system, certain types of identity theft, and related cybercrimes.

This bill before us today is before us because the demands on these agents have increased significantly under the Trump administration. President Trump seems to travel to properties in Florida, New Jersey, and Virginia almost every weekend, and the number of individuals in the Trump administration under Secret Service protection has exceeded 40, in comparison to just over 30 under the Obama administration. Protective overtime hours for special agents are 15 to 20 percent higher than those during the last non-presidential campaign year.

Because of the increased workload, many Secret Service personnel will hit the statutory pay cap this year, and next. This bill would raise the cap through calendar year 2018. This change is necessary to allow Secret Service agents to be compensated for the extraordinary rigors and time demands placed upon them as they work diligently to fulfill their critical mission. The adjustment is necessary for the retention of well-trained agents and the recruitment of new ones.

I also note that the bill would require GAO to conduct a study of the Secret Service's implementation of recommendations concerning training and personnel made 3 years ago by the Secret Service Mission Panel. Congress will benefit from receiving a progress report on this effort.

The various provisions of this bill will help make the Secret Service a more effective agency in pursuing its dual mission.

Mr. Speaker, I, therefore, support H.R. 3731 and ask that my colleagues do the same.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE), who is a member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the United States Secret Service is one of the Federal Government's premier law enforcement agencies.

The agency's critical mission is to protect the President, his family, and other senior government officials. Agency personnel may also provide protection at high-profile events. It has a zero-fail mission; therefore, it is vital that the Secret Service is fully staffed with nothing but the best.

Unfortunately, the agency has faced tremendous staffing problems. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform released a bipartisan report in 2015, finding the Secret Service has faced challenges related to hiring and retaining personnel.

□ 1245

The report states that the staffing crisis threatens to jeopardize its critical mission. Staffing issues have persisted, although the agency has implemented a series of reforms to help get its hiring and attrition problems under control.

The consequence of these hiring and attrition problems is that the agency does not have enough personnel to fulfill its zero fail protective mission. This means existing personnel are working excessive overtime.

With all the overtime, many Secret Service personnel have reached the cap on premium pay set in law. As a result, agents are not paid for overtime hours if doing so would result in compensation above the cap during any biweekly pay period. These max-outs, as they are known, contribute to the agency's low morale and unsurprisingly cause the rate of attrition to spike.

Congress first lifted the pay cap for the Secret Service in 2016 to help the agency handle the demands of staffing the Presidential campaign. However, nearly 1,300 employees are at risk of exceeding the pay cap in 2017.

Due to the extraordinary staffing problems facing the agency, this bill extends the pay cap waiver provided last year until the end of 2018. Employees will receive compensation up to the basic pay currently given to members of the Executive Schedule, Level II.

Every Secret Service employee who has exceeded the cap or who is at risk of doing so because of excessive overtime will receive additional compensation under this bill.

I want to be clear. This bill is narrowly targeted to fix a problem currently facing the agency and does so in a timely manner.

The Secret Service cannot continue to rely on expensive overtime, and Congress fully expects the agency to get its hiring attrition problems under control. To this end, the bill also requires a report by the Government Accountability Office focused on the Secret Service's implementation of recommendations found in the 2014 Protective Mission Panel report.

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

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the recommendations, which include reforming the recruiting and hiring process, hiring additional personnel, and implementing a zero tolerance disciplinary system, are instructive and will help the Secret Service develop a world class human resource system.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank the House Judiciary Committee, the Homeland Security Committee, along with the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on putting forth this important legislation and bringing it to the floor in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the extra time and I urge all Members to support this bill.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the chairman and ranking member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I rise to support H.R. 3731, the Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2017, which Congressman KATKO and I cosponsored.

The bill would authorize an increase in the annual salary and the overtime limit for the men and women of the Secret Service so they can be paid for the significant overtime they have already worked in 2017 and will be working in 2018.

Last year, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform unanimously passed the Overtime Pay for Protective Services Act of 2016. The bill authorized overtime pay for more than 1,400 Secret Service agents and the thousands of hours they worked in the 2016 Presidential campaign year.

Although non-campaign years are usually significantly less demanding, the size of President Trump's family, their frequent travel, and the need to secure their multiple residences have caused more than 1,000 Secret Service agents to reach the annual pay cap in 2017. These demands on the Secret Service will remain extremely high and require substantial resources.

In December 2015, the Oversight Committee unanimously adopted a report concluding that the Secret Service ". . . is experiencing a staffing crisis that threatens to jeopardize its critical mission."

Our report found that this was due in large part to ". . . significant cuts imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011."

The report recommended that Congress ensure that the Secret Service has sufficient funds to restore staffing to the required levels.

Providing this much-needed overtime pay relief is an essential step towards fulfilling the committee's recommendation. The hardworking men and women of the Secret Service put their lives on the line every day and make tremendous personal sacrifices for our country.

We cannot expect the Secret Service to recruit and retain the best of the best and be the elite of the elite if they are not even being compensated for the hours that are demanded of them.

Congress has a responsibility to provide the resources they need. I am proud to join my colleagues in this bipartisan effort to do just that, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I have no other Members to speak on this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me acknowledge Mr. CUMMINGS for his leadership on this legislation. I believe the combination of Members who are sponsoring this legislation and the work of the Oversight and Government Reform, Homeland Security, and Judiciary Committees clearly speak to almost the crisis of the issue and what we are dealing with.

As we come to a close, Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that my colleagues will vote for this legislation in resounding numbers and I hope that the Senate will hotline this legislation so that it can immediately get to the desk of the President.

I would also ask that we recognize that we must do everything we can to protect our United States Secret Service personnel and ensure an effective process for recruitment and retention of these agents.

I am glad there is an element in this legislation that will allow for a review of all of these issues and that the Congress will have a role in assessing how we can work with the Secret Service agency to improve its performance, its retention, and certainly to say to those hardworking agents that we appreciate them, by way of compensation.

These agents play a vital role in our democratic system both here at home and abroad. Their keen attention to details and adequate response to dangerous situations around the world cannot be measured in dollar signs.

Beyond protecting the President, Vice President, their families, and other identified individuals, the Secret Service plays a vital role in representing the United States' interests around the world through criminal investigation activities that span the gamut from anticounterfeiting operations to now encompassing financial crimes; identity theft, which has exponentially grown in the United States; counterfeiting; computer fraud; and computer-based attacks on the Nation's financial, banking, and telecommunications infrastructure, among other areas.

Congress is standing up to make its voice known and to make appropriate changes.

I think it is appropriate for the administration in this instance, the Commander in Chief, to stand up as well and review the extensive travel and the burdens that are being placed on the Secret Service agents and their families. They are not complaining, but I think it behooves any good leader to look at what can be improved and what can be corrected in order to ensure the astuteness, the excellence, and the safety and security of the protectees and those agents who are out there on the line sacrificing or willing to sacrifice their life.

For all of these reasons, I therefore support this bill. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to vote for this legislation, H.R. 3731, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas for helping to bring this bill to the floor today. I congratulate my good friend from New York, Mr. KATKO, on this legislation. It is going to be very important to our men and women of the Secret Service who put their lives on the line every day in dedication to their service.

Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3731, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I support the passage of H.R. 3731 today to strengthen the resolve of our men and women in the Secret Service to continue performing their essential duties in protecting the President while receiving the appropriate compensation for their efforts which go beyond normal working hours. This legislation ensures that a pay cap is no longer a barrier to paying Secret Service agents who stand watch at all hours of the night, often racking up significant overtime. The current pay cap restricts the Secret Service from paying their employees what is due to them.

Director Alles believes this legislation to be such an important initiative to pass that he personally came to discuss it with me as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee with oversight of the Secret Service. I am glad that we are, in a bipartisan way, enabling the men and women of the Secret Service to now receive the necessary compensation for the significant overtime work they perform.

The GAO reporting requirement in the legislation will also provide to Congress important analysis of how well the Secret Service has implemented the recommendations of the Protective Mission Panel. Knowing these results will help in conducting crucial oversight of the agency.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3731, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

STOPPING ABUSIVE FEMALE EXPLOITATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3317) to amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the penalty for female genital mutilation, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3317

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Stopping Abusive Female Exploitation Act of 2017” or the “SAFE Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. INCREASED PENALTY FOR FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION.

Section 116 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking “5 years” each place it appears and inserting “15 years”.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that States should have in place laws that require health care professionals, teachers, and other school employees to report to local law enforcement agencies any instance of suspected female genital mutilation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3317, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 3317, the Stopping Abusive Female Exploitation Act, or the SAFE Act.

This legislation increases the criminal penalty for female genitalia mutilation of a minor from a maximum of 5 years to a maximum of 15 years. It also encourages States to adopt laws to require certain professionals who work with children to report suspected mutilation cases.

Female genitalia mutilation, or FGM, is internationally recognized as a human rights violation for girls and women. It is an extreme form of abuse against women and girls, often causing serious and permanent health complications, including shock and death.

Across at least 30 countries, more than 200 million girls and women alive today have been subjected to FGM and more than 3 million girls are estimated to be at risk every year of being subjected to this procedure even though it is outlawed in 42 countries.

Congress first passed legislation making this horrific practice illegal in 1996. The Federal Prohibition of Female Genitalia Mutilation Act made it illegal to perform FGM on girls younger than 18 years of age in the United States.

In 2013, Congress passed another law, the Transport for Female Genital Mutilation Act, which amended the 1996 legislation and made it a crime to knowingly transport a girl out of the United States for the purpose of FGM, yet the practice still continues. According to some estimates, the number

of girls who have undergone FGM has tripled over the past 2 decades.

In 2017, after 20 years on the books, the first charges were filed under the FGM statute against a doctor in Michigan who performed this disfiguring assault on two 7-year-olds.

By increasing the criminal exposure for this crime, we send a message that our country will not tolerate the mutilation of our young girls and women and we will do what we can to prevent that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. TROTT from the great State of Michigan for introducing this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Florida for managing this bill along with the previous initiative, and let me thank Mrs. MALONEY and Mr. TROTT for their leadership on this very important legislation.

Protecting girls and young women from abuse and exploitation is vital to the health of our communities. The Stopping Abusive Female Exploitation Act is intended to amend 18 U.S.C. Section 116 by raising the penalty such that the maximum penalty for the crime of genital mutilation is 15 years.

□ 1300

Given the abhorrent nature of this practice, States should have in place laws that require healthcare professionals, school employees, and other professionals who work with children to report any suspected practice of female genital mutilation to the appropriate law enforcement entity.

This legislation is important as a means for Congress to appropriately punish those who commit this crime. Female genital manipulation, cutting, is internationally recognized as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is currently a crime in 26 States, including Michigan and Texas. It is also a Federal crime.

Around the world, at least five girls are mutilated, cut, every hour. An estimated 100 million girls and 140 million women worldwide are living with the consequences of FGM. Despite the fact that FGM has been banned in the United States since 1996, people continue to engage in this abusive practice.

Recently, Michigan was faced with the first Federal prosecution under this statute, whereby a Michigan doctor was charged with performing female genital mutilation on two girls that crossed State lines. Because this intolerable practice has no medical benefits, it has no place in our society, and those who commit these horrendous crimes should be held accountable for their actions. I, therefore, ask support for this bill and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Protecting girls and young women from abuse and exploitation is vital to the health of our communities.

"The Stopping Abusive Female Exploitation Act of 2017" is intended to amend 18 U.S.C. § 116 by increasing the maximum penalty for the crime of female genital mutilation (FGM) from five years to fifteen.

Given the abhorrent nature of this practice, States should have in place laws that require health care professionals, school employees and other professionals that work with children, to report any suspected practice of female genital mutilation, to the appropriate law enforcement entity.

I support this legislation as a means for Congress to appropriately punish those that commit this crime.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is internationally recognized as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It is currently a crime in 26 states, including Michigan and Texas. It is also a federal crime.

Around the world, at least five girls are mutilated/cut every hour. An estimated 100 million girls and 140 million women worldwide are living with the consequences of FGM.

Despite the fact that FGM has been banned in the United States since 1996, people continue to engage in this abusive practice.

Recently, Michigan was faced with the first federal prosecution under this statute, whereby, a Michigan doctor was charged with performing female genital mutilation on two girls that crossed state-lines.

Because this intolerable practice has no medical benefits, it has no place in our society and those who commit these horrendous crimes should be held accountable for their actions.

I therefore, support this bill and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, we must do everything we can to protect victims, particularly, the most vulnerable people in our society, our children.

This bill will certainly do that. Beyond serving as a deterrent for many in our society that continue to engage in the practice of female genital mutilation, this legislation will also provide a more appropriate punishment for violation of the FGM statute, under 18 U.S.C. § 116.

For all these reasons, I therefore, support this bill.

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

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. TROTT), my good friend.

Mr. TROTT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Florida for managing this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3317, the SAFE Act, legislation that will increase the Federal penalty for female genital mutilation from 5 years to 15 years.

This past April, just north of Detroit, reports of this appalling and brutal practice surfaced in my district. As a lifelong resident of southeast Michigan, I was horrified to learn that three local residents, including two physicians, professionals we trust with our children, were charged for allegedly performing and participating in this barbaric practice.

The subsequent Federal prosecution has shed light on an evil practice that

has no place in southeast Michigan or the United States. This person who claims to be a physician is a monster and has reportedly committed this heinous act hundreds of times.

This despicable practice has no place in our society, and we must ensure our Federal laws reflect this principle. We must make it clear to Americans and the rest of the world that this practice will not be tolerated.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that over 500,000 girls in the United States have undergone or are at risk of FGM. That is 500,000 girls too many. We must set a zero tolerance against this practice. This is gender violence and oppression, and it is time for the government to punish such egregious behavior accordingly.

My bipartisan SAFE Act will increase the Federal penalty from 5 to 15 years, putting it more in line with other developed countries. We need to protect our girls right here at home, and increasing the penalty will go a long way toward accomplishing this goal.

I want to thank the coauthor of this bill, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), my friend and colleague, for her work. I also want to thank Chairman GOODLATTE for his effort and leadership in moving this bill through the committee process.

Mr. Speaker, today we can step toward eradicating this barbaric practice, and I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 3317.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), a good friend and a champion of these issues dealing with vulnerable women, the original sponsor of this legislation along with Mr. TROTT.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, SHEILA JACKSON LEE, for her extraordinary leadership on this issue and so many others, and I thank her for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3317, the Stopping Abusive Female Exploitation, or SAFE, Act. It is a bipartisan, noncontroversial issue; and I hope this body unanimously supports it, as it will save the health and protection and stop the abuse of girls in our country.

I am the Democratic lead on this bill and, first, want to thank my friend and colleague from Michigan (Mr. TROTT) for his devotion, extraordinary leadership, and commitment to bringing this bill to the floor.

Female genital mutilation is an issue that affects women and girls in the United States and around the world.

I want to express my regret that he has decided to retire from this body. We will miss his leadership in Congress. His district, I am sure, and State will miss it, and, I must say, I believe our country will miss it. It is one thing when a woman champions a woman's

issue, but to have a like-minded man join you and lead you is a very, very special expression of leadership, and I am deeply grateful for the gentleman's leadership on behalf of the girls and women that this bill will help.

Female genital mutilation is a terrible, abusive practice that causes immense physical and emotional pain and damage to young girls that can last a lifetime. It is a Federal crime. Twenty-two States have laws against it, yet it is still being practiced in our great country.

It is illegal in the United States, and while we condemn this practice around the world, we really need to do more to stop it right here at home.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. The CDC estimates that in 2012, 500,000 females in the United States have been subjected to or are at risk of female genital mutilation, and that number is rising. It is up to us to bring that number to zero.

This bill creates a harsher and more appropriate penalty, increasing the current sentence of 5 years to 15 years imprisonment. Stricter penalties for performing the procedure are critical to eradicating this horrific abuse.

I not only thank my colleague, but also Chairman GOODLATTE and Ranking Member NADLER and our sponsors in the Senate, Senators FEINSTEIN and GRASSLEY.

This is an important bill. I hope this entire body supports it. It will literally save the lives of many young girls in our country.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers on this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3317.

Unfortunately, this bill is needed to help protect young women and girls from the horrible practice of female genital mutilation. H.R. 3317 would increase the maximum penalty from 5 years to 15 years for female genital mutilation to appropriately punish those who commit this horrible crime.

FGM, female genital mutilation, is internationally recognized as a violation of the human rights of girls and young women. It is currently a crime in 26 States, including New York, in addition to the prohibition in the Federal criminal code.

Around the world, at least five girls are mutilated in this way every single hour. An estimated 100 million girls and 140 million women worldwide are living with the consequences of genital mutilation.

Despite the fact that female genital mutilation has been banned in the United States since 1996, people continue to engage in this abusive practice. Recently, the first prosecution

was initiated under the Federal statute. A doctor in Michigan was charged with performing female genital mutilation on two girls who had been brought across State lines for this purpose.

Those who commit these horrendous crimes should be held accountable for their actions. I support increasing the maximum penalty under Federal law from 5 to 15 years in order to reflect the severity of these injuries and their long-lasting consequences and, perhaps, to better deter these crimes. Therefore, I support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, let me thank the gentleman from Florida for managing and joining me in the managing of this legislation, and, again, I thank the cosponsors.

Let me also express my appreciation to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. TROTT) for his service to this Congress and, as well, for his excellent bill that is on the floor.

I thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), as well, for her leadership on this legislation.

I think it is important to note that these are dastardly acts against women and girls; and as I indicated, across the world, we are talking about 140 million women and 100 million girls who have been subjected to living with the consequences of the FGM. It was banned in the United States since 1996, but we know this act still goes on. So we must do everything we can to protect victims, particularly the most vulnerable people in our society: our children.

This is not a mandatory minimum. This is upwards of 15 years. This is a deserving penalty for a horrific crime. This bill will certainly do that to try to protect these children here in the United States.

Beyond serving as a deterrent for many in our society who continue to engage in the practice of female genital mutilation, this legislation will also provide appropriate punishment for violation of the FGM statute under 18 U.S.C. 116.

For all these reasons, I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I would first like to thank the gentlewoman from Texas for helping to manage these two very important bills on the floor today.

I, too, want to congratulate Mrs. MALONEY and Mr. TROTT on H.R. 3317, to ban this horrible procedure of FGM and really help to protect the women and girls of the United States.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, the Stopping Abusive Female Exploitation, or "SAFE," Act addresses the internationally-recognized

human rights violation of female genital mutilation (FGM). The Center for Disease Control estimates that approximately 500,000 women and girls in the US have undergone the procedure or are at risk of having it inflicted upon them, and it has only grown in prevalence over the last two decades. FGM provides no health benefits for women and girls, and has long-lasting and harmful physical and psychological consequences.

While FGM is rightly a federal crime under current law, the current penalty is insufficient. It does not reflect the barbaric and medieval nature of the crime; nor does it reflect the harm caused to these young girls. That is why we are considering the SAFE Act today.

As a father and grandfather, I can think of no more important work than protecting our children from those who seek to do them harm.

I commend Representative DAVE TROTT, an alumnus of this Committee, and Representative CAROLYN MALONEY, for introducing the SAFE Act and for their tireless efforts on behalf of FGM victims. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3317, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 3731;

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 3317; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

SECRET SERVICE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3731) to provide overtime pay for employees of the United States Secret Service, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 407, nays 4, not voting 22, as follows:

[Roll No. 655]

YEAS—407

Abraham	Davis, Danny	Hunter
Adams	Davis, Rodney	Hurd
Aderholt	DeFazio	Issa
Aguilar	DeGette	Jackson Lee
Allen	Delaney	Jayapal
Amodei	DeLauro	Jeffries
Arrington	DelBene	Jenkins (KS)
Babin	Demings	Jenkins (WV)
Bacon	Denham	Johnson (GA)
Banks (IN)	DeSantis	Johnson (LA)
Barletta	DeSaulnier	Johnson (OH)
Barr	DesJarlais	Johnson, E. B.
Barragán	Deutch	Johnson, Sam
Barton	Diaz-Balart	Jones
Bass	Dingell	Jordan
Beatty	Doggett	Joyce (OH)
Bera	Donovan	Kaptur
Bergman	Doyle, Michael	Katko
Beyer	F.	Keating
Biggs	Duffy	Kelly (IL)
Bilirakis	Duncan (SC)	Kelly (MS)
Bishop (GA)	Duncan (TN)	Kelly (PA)
Bishop (MI)	Dunn	Khanna
Bishop (UT)	Ellison	Kildee
Black	Emmer	Kilmer
Blackburn	Engel	Kind
Blum	Eshoo	King (IA)
Blumenauer	Espallat	King (NY)
Blunt Rochester	Estes (KS)	Kinzinger
Bonamici	Esty (CT)	Knight
Bost	Evans	Krishnamoorthi
Boyle, Brendan	Farenthold	Kuster (NH)
F.	Faso	Kustoff (TN)
Brady (PA)	Ferguson	Labrador
Brady (TX)	Fitzpatrick	LaHood
Brat	Fleischmann	LaMalfa
Brooks (AL)	Flores	Lamborn
Brooks (IN)	Fortenberry	Lance
Brown (MD)	Foster	Langevin
Buchanan	Foxo	Larsen (WA)
Buck	Frankel (FL)	Larson (CT)
Bucshon	Franks (AZ)	Latta
Budd	Frelinghuysen	Lawrence
Burgess	Fudge	Lawson (FL)
Bustos	Gabbard	Lee
Butterfield	Gaetz	Levin
Byrne	Gallagher	Lewis (GA)
Calvert	Gallego	Lewis (MN)
Capuano	Garamendi	Lieu, Ted
Carbajal	Garrett	Lipinski
Cárdenas	Gianforte	LoBiondo
Carson (IN)	Gibbs	Loeb sack
Carter (GA)	Gohmert	Lofgren
Carter (TX)	Gomez	Long
Cartwright	Gonzalez (TX)	Loudermilk
Castor (FL)	Goodlatte	Love
Castro (TX)	Gosar	Lowenthal
Chabot	Gottheimer	Lowey
Cheney	Gowdy	Lucas
Chu, Judy	Granger	Luetkemeyer
Cicilline	Graves (GA)	Lujan Grisham,
Clarke (NY)	Graves (LA)	M.
Clay	Graves (MO)	Lujan, Ben Ray
Clyburn	Green, Al	Lynch
Coffman	Green, Gene	MacArthur
Cohen	Grijalva	Maloney,
Cole	Guthrie	Carolyn B.
Collins (GA)	Hanabusa	Maloney, Sean
Collins (NY)	Handel	Marchant
Comer	Harper	Marino
Comstock	Harris	Marshall
Conaway	Hartzler	Masie
Connolly	Hastings	Mast
Cook	Heck	Matsui
Cooper	Hensarling	McCarthy
Correa	Herrera Beutler	McCaul
Costa	Hice, Jody B.	McClintock
Costello (PA)	Higgins (LA)	McCollum
Courtney	Higgins (NY)	McEachin
Cramer	Hill	McGovern
Crawford	Himes	McHenry
Crist	Holding	McKinley
Crowley	Hollingsworth	McMorris
Cuellar	Hoyer	Rodgers
Culberson	Hudson	McNerney
Cummings	Huffman	McSally
Curtis	Huizenga	Meadows
Davis (CA)	Hultgren	Meehan

Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)

Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas
J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppertsberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart

Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Wasserman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan
F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curtis
Davidson

the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTH-ERFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 409, nays 0, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 656]

YEAS—409

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan
F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curtis
Davidson

Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael
F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Españillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Fox
Fox
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson

Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loeb
Loeb
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowe
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham,
M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney,
Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley

McMorris
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond

Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas
J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppertsberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto

Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—4

Amash
Davidson

Grothman
Sanford

Bridenstine
Brownley (CA)
Clark (MA)
Cleaver
Conyers
Curbelo (FL)
Dent
Griffith

Gutiérrez
Kennedy
Kihuen
Meeks
Neal
Payne
Pelosi
Pocan

Quigley
Scott, Austin
Simpson
Vela
Walz
Waters, Maxine

NOT VOTING—22

□ 1337

Messrs. AMASH and GROTHMAN changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Ms. BONAMICI changed her vote from "nay" to "yea."

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STOPPING ABUSIVE FEMALE EXPLOITATION ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3317) to amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the penalty for female genital mutilation, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

NOT VOTING—24

Amodei
Bridenstine
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Cárdenas
Clark (MA)
Conyers
Curbelo (FL)

Dent
Griffith
Gutiérrez
Kennedy
Meeks
Neal
Payne
Pelosi

Pocan
Quigley
Scott, Austin
Simpson
Wagner
Walz
Webster (FL)
Woodall

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1345

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 656.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I was absent for rollcall Nos. 655 (on the passage of H.R. 3731), and 656 (on the passage of H.R. 3317). Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on both these votes.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I was absent for today's vote series due to family considerations. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 655 and "yea" on rollcall No. 656.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 224, nays 183, answered "present" 1, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 657]

YEAS—224

Abraham	Franks (AZ)	Napolitano
Adams	Frelinghuysen	Newhouse
Aderholt	Gabbard	Noem
Allen	Gianforte	Norman
Arrington	Gibbs	Nunes
Bacon	Gonzalez (TX)	O'Rourke
Banks (IN)	Goodlatte	Olson
Barletta	Gottheimer	Pascarell
Barton	Gowdy	Perlmutter
Beatty	Granger	Pingree
Bilirakis	Grothman	Polis
Bishop (MI)	Guthrie	Posey
Bishop (UT)	Hanabusa	Ratcliffe
Black	Handel	Rice (SC)
Blackburn	Harper	Roby
Blumenauer	Harris	Roe (TN)
Blunt Rochester	Hartzler	Rogers (KY)
Bonamic	Heck	Rohrabacher
Brady (TX)	Hensarling	Rooney, Thomas J.
Brat	Higgins (LA)	Rosen
Brooks (AL)	Higgins (NY)	Ross
Brooks (IN)	Himes	Rothfus
Brown (MD)	Hollingsworth	Royce (CA)
Buchanan	Huffman	Ruppersberger
Bucshon	Hultgren	Rush
Bustos	Jeffries	Russell
Butterfield	Johnson (GA)	Scalise
Byrne	Johnson (LA)	Schiff
Calvert	Johnson, E. B.	Schneider
Carson (IN)	Johnson, Sam	Schweikert
Carter (TX)	Kaptur	Scott (VA)
Cartwright	Kelly (MS)	Scott, David
Chabot	Kelly (PA)	Sensenbrenner
Cheney	Kildee	Sessions
Chu, Judy	King (IA)	Shea-Porter
Cicilline	King (NY)	Sherman
Clay	Krishnamoorthi	Shimkus
Cole	Kuster (NH)	Shuster
Collins (NY)	Kustoff (TN)	Smith (NE)
Comer	Labrador	Smith (NJ)
Comstock	LaMalfa	Smith (TX)
Cook	Lamborn	Smith (WA)
Cooper	Larsen (WA)	Speier
Courtney	Latta	Stefanik
Cramer	Lewis (MN)	Stivers
Crawford	Lipinski	Suozi
Culberson	Long	Takano
Cummings	Loudermilk	Taylor
Curtis	Love	Thornberry
Davidson	Lowey	Tiberi
Davis (CA)	Lucas	Titus
Davis, Danny	Luetkemeyer	Torres
DeGette	Lujan Grisham,	Trott
DeLauro	M.	Tsongas
DelBene	Luján, Ben Ray	Turner
Demings	Maloney,	Upton
DeSaulnier	Carolyn B.	Vela
DesJarlais	Marino	Wagner
Deutch	Massie	Walden
Diaz-Balart	McCarthy	Walker
Dingell	McCaul	Walorski
Doggett	McClintock	Walters, Mimi
Donovan	McCollum	Wasserman
Doyle, Michael F.	McEachin	Schultz
Duncan (SC)	McHenry	Waters, Maxine
Duncan (TN)	McMorris	Webster (FL)
Dunn	Rodgers	Welch
Ellison	McNerney	Wenstrup
Engel	Meadows	Williams
Eshoo	Meng	Wilson (FL)
Estes (KS)	Mitchell	Wilson (SC)
Ferguson	Moolenaar	Wittman
Fleischmann	Mooney (WV)	Womack
Fortenberry	Moulton	Yarmuth
Foster	Mullin	Young (IA)
Frankel (FL)	Murphy (FL)	
	Nadler	

NAYS—183

Aguilar	Graves (MO)	Pallone
Amash	Green, Al	Palmer
Babin	Green, Gene	Panetta
Barr	Hastings	Paulsen
Barragán	Herrera Beutler	Pearce
Bass	Hice, Jody B.	Perry
Bera	Hill	Peters
Bergman	Holding	Peterson
Beyer	Hoyer	Pittenger
Biggs	Hudson	Poe (TX)
Bishop (GA)	Huizenga	Poliquin
Blum	Hunter	Price (NC)
Bost	Hurd	Raskin
Boyle, Brendan F.	Issa	Reed
Brady (PA)	Jackson Lee	Reichert
Buck	Jayapal	Renacci
Budd	Jenkins (KS)	Rice (NY)
Burgess	Jenkins (WV)	Richmond
Capuano	Johnson (OH)	Rogers (AL)
Carbajal	Jones	Rokita
Cárdenas	Jordan	Ros-Lehtinen
Carter (GA)	Joyce (OH)	Roskam
Castor (FL)	Katko	Rouzer
Castro (TX)	Keating	Roybal-Allard
Clarke (NY)	Kelly (IL)	Ruiz
Cleaver	Khanna	Rutherford
Clyburn	Kihuen	Ryan (OH)
Coffman	Kilmer	Sánchez
Cohen	Kind	Sanford
Collins (GA)	Kinzinger	Sarbanes
Conaway	Knight	Schakowsky
Connolly	LaHood	Schrader
Correa	Lance	Serrano
Costa	Langevin	Sewell (AL)
Costello (PA)	Larson (CT)	Sinema
Crist	Lawrence	Sires
Crowley	Lawson (FL)	Lee
Cuellar	Lee	Slaughter
Davis, Rodney	Levin	Smith (MO)
DeFazio	Lewis (GA)	Smucker
Delaney	Lieu, Ted	Soto
Denham	LoBiondo	Swalwell (CA)
DeSantis	Loeb	Tenney
Duffy	Loeb	Thompson (CA)
Emmer	Lofgren	Thompson (MS)
Españallat	Lowenthal	Thompson (PA)
Esty (CT)	Lynch	
Evans	MacArthur	
Farenthold	Maloney, Sean	
Faso	Marchant	
Fitzpatrick	Marshall	
Flores	Mast	
Foxx	Matsui	
Fudge	McGovern	
Gallagher	McKinley	
Gallego	McSally	
Garamendi	Meehan	
Garrett	Messer	
Gomez	Moore	
Gosar	Nolan	
Graves (GA)	Norcross	
	O'Halleran	
	Palazzo	

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Tonko
NOT VOTING—25

Amodei	Graves (LA)	Pocan
Bridenstine	Griffith	Quigley
Brownley (CA)	Grijalva	Rooney, Francis
Clark (MA)	Gutierrez	Scott, Austin
Conyers	Kennedy	Simpson
Curbelo (FL)	Meeks	Stewart
Dent	Neal	Walz
Gaetz	Payne	
Gohmert	Pelosi	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1351

Mr. KIND changed his vote from "yea" to "nay."

So the Journal was approved. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for rollcall votes 655, 656, and 657 on Tuesday, December 5, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 655

and 656, and I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 657.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, December 5, for personal reasons, I was absent and missed votes. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

- Rollcall No. 655—"Yea."
- Rollcall No. 656—"Yea."
- Rollcall No. 657—"Yea."

MODIFICATION IN APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 1, TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection and pursuant to clause 11 of rule I, the Chair removes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) as a conferee on H.R. 1 and appoints the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) to fill the vacancy.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will notify the Senate of the change in conferees.

ENHANCING VETERAN CARE ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1266) to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1266

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Enhancing Veteran Care Act".

SEC. 2. INVESTIGATION OF MEDICAL CENTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may contract with a nonprofit organization that accredits health care organizations and programs in the United States to investigate a medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs to assess and report deficiencies of the facilities at such medical center.

(b) AUTHORITY OF DIRECTORS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to coordination under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall delegate the authority under subsection (a) to contract for an investigation at a medical center of the Department to the Director of the Veterans Integrated Service Network in which the medical center is located or the director of such medical center.

(2) COORDINATION.—Before entering into a contract under paragraph (1), the Director of a Veterans Integrated Service Network or the director of a medical center, as the case may be, shall notify the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Comptroller General of the United States for purposes of coordinating any investigation conducted pursuant to such contract with any other investigations that may be ongoing.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed—

(1) to prevent the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs from conducting any review, audit,

evaluation, or inspection regarding a topic for which an investigation is conducted under this section; or

(2) to modify the requirement that employees of the Department assist with any review, audit, evaluation, or inspection conducted by the Office of the Inspector General of the Department.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1266, the Enhancing Veteran Care Act. S. 1266 would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to contract with a nonprofit entity specializing in civilian accreditation or healthcare evaluation to investigate and assess deficiencies at VA medical centers and to coordinate any such investigations with the VA inspector general and the Government Accountability Office.

This bill is sponsored by Senator JAMES INHOFE from Oklahoma and is companion legislation to H.R. 42, which is sponsored by my good friend, Representative MARKWAYNE MULLIN from Oklahoma's Second District. I am grateful to both Senator INHOFE and Congressman MULLIN for their work on this legislation.

We are all familiar with the various challenges and scandals that have plagued VA medical centers across the country since the 2014 systemwide VA access and accountability crisis.

I, along with Ranking Member WALZ and other committee members, our Senate colleagues, Secretary Shulkin, veterans service organizations, and others, have been working tirelessly to transform the VA healthcare system into the modern, high-performing healthcare organization that our veterans deserve.

S. 1266 is in line with those efforts in that it would provide VA an additional avenue to identify and resolve problems impacting the care our veterans receive in VA medical facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, since 2014, the Veterans' Affairs Committee has held countless hearings focused on VA medical centers that were found to have covered up

wait times or failed to consistently provide high-quality healthcare to veterans.

Many of these failures were first brought to light by whistleblower allegations and were later substantiated by Government Accountability Office studies and VA inspector general investigations. Solutions to these failures were only uncovered through multiple inspections of medical centers' facilities, their policies, and their employees.

Congress relies on the hard work of medical inspectors and investigators at the VA, the OIG, and the GAO to review allegations and issue recommendations regarding how VA and Congress should work to correct deficiencies at medical centers and hold VA officials accountable. With limited resources, the inspector general and the GAO have completed a staggering number of investigations and reviews that have led to significant reforms of the VA system. They should be commended for their excellent work.

□ 1400

The Enhancing Veteran Care Act gives the Secretary another tool for developing solutions to problems at VA medical facilities. The VA Secretary should be able to contract with nonprofit-nongovernmental medical inspectors or auditors when deemed appropriate.

However, I strongly believe that granting the VA Secretary the authority to contract with nongovernmental inspectors and auditors should not result in cuts to the IG's or VA's budgets. We need to ensure VA inspectors and the VA OIG have the resources to continue their thorough and timely investigations.

I am also concerned about these nongovernmental organizations not being required to follow Federal laws that require transparency. I believe these nongovernmental bodies should be held to the very same level of transparency as the IG, GAO, and VA investigators, including requirements to publish their methods for conducting audits and reviews alongside their findings and recommendations. Without transparency, Congress and the public will not have the same level of confidence in their findings.

If we had the opportunity to consider this legislation in committee, we could have received testimony from VA, the IG, and GAO on this legislation and done more to address concerns around transparency, while also ensuring that investigative efforts are not duplicated. I encourage the chairman to continue his inclusive approach by seeking to bring all veterans related bills through committee for due consideration.

However, these concerns will not prevent me from supporting the Enhancing Veteran Care Act. I trust the Secretary will execute this authority in a manner that supports and supplements government-led investigations.

Veterans should have full confidence that they will receive high-quality healthcare at VA facilities. Rigorous and transparent investigations and audits will help guarantee these high standards are met.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), my good friend and sponsor of the House companion bill, H.R. 42.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROE for allowing this to come to the floor and Leader MCCARTHY for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor. I also want to thank my fellow Senators from Oklahoma, Mr. INHOFE and Mr. LANKFORD, for their great work in getting this passed in the Senate.

As the sponsor of H.R. 42, the House companion bill to S. 1266, I urge my colleagues to support and vote in favor of today's bill.

Nearly a year ago, we debated this bill on the floor and saw it passed by voice vote. I look forward to another strong response from the House in sending this bill to the President's desk and it becoming law.

This bill simply authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to contract with nonprofit organizations that accredit healthcare organizations in order to investigate VA medical centers.

This bill would allow the VA to get a second opinion from outside of the agency in order to get the best information and provide the best care for our veterans. Just like how patients sometimes need to get a second opinion on their diagnosis, the VA should not be above bringing in a second opinion.

Our veterans deserve care equal to the finest civilian hospitals, so let's bring more transparency to the VA by allowing them to invite the people who evaluate those private hospitals to take a look at the VA and make recommendations when problems arise.

This is a commonsense bill that will help improve the care for our veterans, and I hope all will support it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER), my good friend and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1266, Enhancing Veteran Care Act.

Currently, the Department of Veterans Affairs can contract with qualified and accredited third-party nonprofits to investigate a VA medical center for deficiencies in its facility. Only the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, however, is directly capable of authorizing these third-party investigations.

Unfortunately, this process is needlessly cumbersome and delays the improvement of medical centers. This bill

is an important reform because it empowers Veteran Integrated Service Network directors and VA medical center directors to initiate these third-party reviews.

The Manchester VA Medical Center in my home State of New Hampshire currently faces a number of questions regarding the services it provides and the facilities it manages. While Secretary Shulkin has initiated reviews of the facility, it took a number of whistleblowers to put their reputation and jobs on the line to force action.

Legislation like the Enhancing Veteran Care Act could have streamlined this process and made both the facility and the VISN more accountable to the needs of veterans in New Hampshire. VA must be better at assessing its own shortcomings.

Ultimately, veterans in the Granite State and across the country deserve the highest standard of care.

I thank Senators INHOFE and LANKFORD for introducing this important legislation. I thank Senator SHAHEEN, one of the lead Democratic co-sponsors of the bill, for helping advance this bill through the U.S. Senate and being attentive to the needs of our Granite State veterans.

I proudly support this legislation and urge all of my colleagues to support this bill and immediately send it to the President's desk.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of S. 1266, the Enhancing Veteran Care Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. This has been a team effort on the Veterans' Affairs Committee to work to try to improve the care that our veterans and Nation's heroes get throughout this country. The involvement on both sides of the aisle on our committee is unprecedented, I think, for a committee working toward a single goal and purpose.

Many times, we have differences of opinion, but this bill is just another tool that the VA will be able to use to improve the care that veterans get.

I received a letter today from a gentleman in New Mexico who had a very different experience 6 or 7 years ago with the VA. He was even hesitant to go back. He went back to this VA hospital and had a very pleasant experience. So I think things are changing for the better, I think due to the hard work of the leadership at the VA, the people who work there every day, and this committee.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCLINTOCK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1266.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

—————

CONDEMNING ETHNIC CLEANSING OF ROHINGYA AND CALLING FOR AN END TO ATTACKS IN AND AN IMMEDIATE RESTORATION OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO RAKHINE, BURMA

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 90) condemning ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and calling for an end to the attacks in and an immediate restoration of humanitarian access to the state of Rakhine in Burma, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 90

Whereas on August 25, 2017, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army carried out attacks on Government positions in the state of Rakhine in Burma ("Rakhine State");

Whereas in recent decades the Rohingya people have lost, through systematic discrimination by Burmese national, state and local authorities, a range of civil and political rights, including citizenship, and face barriers today such that they are mostly stateless peoples;

Whereas since the August 25 attacks, Burma's military and security forces, as well as private mobs, have carried out attacks resulting in over 600,000 Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh;

Whereas Amnesty International described the attacks by stating that "Myanmar security forces are setting northern Rakhine State ablaze in a targeted campaign to push the Rohingya people out of Myanmar.;"

Whereas the United Nations Security Council has called for an end to the violence and attacks;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights has said that the response by the military is "grossly disproportionate" and a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing";

Whereas Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has said, "This violence must stop, this persecution must stop";

Whereas under Burma's military-drafted constitution, the country's military and security services are not subject to civilian rule and only Burma's Commander-in-Chief, Min Aung Hlaing, can command troops to cease attacks impacting civilians in Rakhine State;

Whereas Burma's civilian Government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, has not yet taken necessary steps to address the violence and should take further measures, including to address the pervasive problem of hate speech;

Whereas the United States acknowledges the democratic transition underway in Burma, maintains hope for further genuine democratic reforms, and expects Burma's elected officials to take action to prevent violence and secure rights;

Whereas the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State ("Rakhine Commission") examined, beginning in 2016, the underlying tensions in Rakhine State and made a series of recommendations including a wide range of suggestions and policy changes dealing with humanitarian aid, citizenship, reconciliation, and peace;

Whereas the Rakhine Commission stated, "While Myanmar has every right to defend its own territory, a highly militarized response is unlikely to bring peace to the area. What is needed is a calibrated approach — one that combines political, developmental, security and human rights responses to ensure that violence does not escalate and intercommunal tensions are kept under control.;"

Whereas the United Nations estimates that \$434,000,000 in humanitarian assistance will be needed to provide life-sustaining support to 1,200,000 people, both refugees and host communities, in the first few months of this crisis; and

Whereas the United States is providing an initial \$32,000,000 in humanitarian assistance to address the urgent needs of Rohingya fleeing violence from Rakhine State into Bangladesh, as well as the needs of internally displaced persons in Rakhine State and host communities in Bangladesh: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) condemns the attacks against civilians by Burma's military and security forces and calls on Burma's Commander-in-Chief, Min Aung Hlaing, to immediately end all attacks against civilians in the state of Rakhine in Burma;

(2) expresses deepest appreciation to the Government of Bangladesh for providing refuge to those fleeing violence and attacks;

(3) condemns the attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and the violence in Rakhine and Rohingya communities, but warns that these attacks do not justify the unrestrained response by Burmese military and security forces that has resulted in severe human rights violations, murderous ethnic cleansing, and atrocities against civilians;

(4) calls on Burma's Government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, and the Burmese military and security forces to work constructively to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, including those relating to justice, reconciliation, humanitarian aid, and citizenship;

(5) calls on Burma's Government and its military and security services to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to refugees and internally displaced persons;

(6) urges support and access for the United Nations Fact Finding Mission to Burma;

(7) calls on Burma's military and Government to allow refugees to voluntarily return to Burma in a manner consistent with internationally recognized principles of human rights and refugee protection and to change laws and policies that have contributed to insecurity in the state of Rakhine; and

(8) calls on the President of the United States to impose sanctions on members of the Burmese military and security forces who are responsible for human rights abuses.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days

to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, for decades, the Burmese Government and its military has systematically oppressed the people known as the Rohingya, a Muslim minority living in the Rakhine State of Burma.

A 1982 citizenship law denies the Rohingya citizenship, even though most of them have lived in the country for generations. They have been denied freedom of movement, access to healthcare, and education. The Rohingya have been marginalized at every level of the Burmese Government, from the top to the bottom.

Making matters worse, Burma's military is engaged in a new brutal crackdown on the Rohingya that the U.S. has rightly deemed "ethnic cleansing." More than 600,000 Rohingya people have been driven from their homes in recent months, forced to cross the border into Bangladesh.

Hundreds have been killed, though with journalists denied access to large areas of Rakhine State, that number is clearly very much higher than those reported. At least 200 villages have been burned to the ground. Land mines have been placed inside Burma's border with Bangladesh, maiming refugees seeking safe haven. There are reports of rapes and all types of violence committed against the Rohingya by the Burmese security forces.

Importantly, this resolution not only condemns the attack against civilians by Burma's security services led by General Min Aung Hlaing, it also reaffirms the crimes committed against the Rohingya as ethnic cleansing. Recently, Secretary of State Tillerson made this strong but warranted determination, a decision that deserves our praise here.

Bangladesh also deserves credit for opening its borders in order to handle the human refugees that are streaming out of Burma, but its government has to honor its promise to build shelter for new arrivals and provide medical services.

In response to this crisis, Secretary Tillerson recently announced an additional \$47 million in humanitarian assistance for Burma and Bangladesh, bringing the total U.S. assistance to more than \$150 million this year. It is very much needed.

State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize winner and the de facto leader of Burma, must make it a top priority to provide for the safety of those in Burma, including the Rohingya. The safe and voluntary return of the victims displaced in Bangladesh must also be a top priority.

But to get to the point where the Rohingya will feel safe enough to re-

turn to their homes, the Burmese Government and military must honor their responsibility to ensure the protection of all of the people of Burma, regardless of their ethnic background, regardless of their religious beliefs.

The violence against the Rohingya must stop, and those responsible for those atrocities must face justice.

The protection of human rights has long been our Nation's top priority in Burma, including freeing Aung San Suu Kyi. Today, that must include the Rohingya. This is a moral issue and a national security issue. No one is secure when extremism and instability is growing in this part of the world.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this measure. Let me, first of all, thank my good friend and fellow New Yorker, Mr. CROWLEY; and our former chair of the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee, Mr. CHABOT, for authoring this important resolution. I also want to thank ED ROYCE, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, for his sustained focus on this tragedy and his leadership in quickly bringing this measure to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to see reports of Rohingya refugees fleeing to Bangladesh and widespread hunger and malnutrition for those left behind.

The Burmese military and security forces are waging a brutal campaign of violence against unarmed civilians, including women and children, killing, raping, and destroying lives and livelihoods.

The Rohingya people have been marginalized for decades, but the unthinkable violence and human suffering since August is ethnic cleansing, pure and simple—a description the Trump administration now agrees with, although they were far too slow to say so—and possibly even genocide.

□ 1415

Over the past 4 months, more than 600,000 men, women, and children have fled to neighboring Bangladesh to find refuge in a country with tremendous needs of its own. This is more than 10 times the number of refugees the administration will allow into the United States this year, the same administration that ended America's participation in the U.N. effort to develop a global compact on migration, all this right in the middle of the world's most serious refugee crisis in history. I say shame on us. We should be doing more.

Bangladesh deserves our deep gratitude for opening its doors to the Rohingya at a time when our government slams the door shut. The Governments of Burma and Bangladesh have struck a deal to begin repatriating Rohingya next month, but it is not clear that anyone is interested in returning right now. In fact, there are reports of more arrivals in Bangladesh each day on fishing boats for those who

can afford passage and on makeshift rafts for those who cannot.

People are leaving Burma out of fear; they are leaving because they are hungry; and they are leaving because they know, if they stay, they will die. The Burmese Government has not yet set appropriate conditions for the voluntary, dignified, and safe return, including allowing an independent United Nations fact-finding mission and addressing citizenship issues.

The United States Congress has long defended the rights and freedoms of the Burmese people, championing Burma's new leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, during her many years under house arrest, supporting Burma's historic 2015 decision, and remaining a committed partner in Burma's ongoing democratic transition. With the measure before us today, this body will continue to speak out on this issue. We support freedom and respect for human rights in Burma.

This measure condemns the horrific actions of the military and security forces, calls for an immediate cessation of its violence, and urges the restoration of humanitarian access. It also calls for Aung San Suu Kyi to exercise moral leadership, something that is needed now more than ever.

We reject the army's claims that what is taking place in Burma is a so-called counterterrorism measure. That is nonsense. It is textbook ethnic cleansing; that is what it is.

We should also encourage other governments to stay engaged and continue to address the pressing needs of these refugees, needs that will only grow as long as this situation remains unresolved.

Lastly, we must also urge our own administration to hold members of the Burmese military and security forces accountable for these atrocities, and I have introduced sanctions legislation to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I support this measure, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, and I compliment both our chairman and our ranking member for how they have ensured that our committee remains a bulwark of support for human rights throughout the world.

It has been 16 years since 3,000 Americans were slaughtered before our eyes by a global terrorist movement, using Islam as an excuse for the cowardly murder of innocent people, people of every faith who were butchered in order to terrorize the rest of us in the world into submission to their fanaticism.

Crucial to our ability to defeat this evil force has been our commitment to

ensure that the battle did not evolve into a war between Islam itself and the rest of us, which would then, of course, pit Muslims against all Christians as well as people of other faiths.

George W. Bush, President of the United States, reached out at that moment after 9/11 to ensure that the plot by these radical terrorists did not succeed in polarizing the world as such. Our greatest success has been preventing that polarization that would have put all the people of the world against Islam and all Muslims against all the rest of the people of the world.

That battle to make sure that does not happen must continue. It is essential to keep open the ties with those people in the Muslim world who are appalled by the terror and brutality of these fanatics who commit such monstrous crimes.

It is vital for our own security that we aggressively condemn terrorism and human rights abuses when it is against Muslim people. The Muslim people are the victims, and they need to know that we are on their side, just as we expect good Muslim people to be on our side when we confront this terrorism in the world. We did that, of course, when the Serbian Christians were killing, ethnically cleansing, Muslim people in Kosovo.

Today we reaffirm to the Muslim people of the world and to ourselves that we loudly proclaim that we are condemning the slaughter of the Rohingya people who reside in the southern states of Burma. If these attacks by the Burmese military continue, we must follow this strong condemnation today with sanctions.

In the meantime, not one bullet or weapon should ever be made available to the Burmese military. And, in the meantime, the Burmese military officers and the government officials who are engaged in this particular policy of genocide against the Rohingya people must know they will be held accountable for their crimes against the Rohingyas, because it is not a crime just against Rohingyas, it is a crime against humanity.

So, again, I commend the leadership of our committee, both the ranking member and the chairman, for making this an important issue for this Congress.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), the author of this resolution, a longtime advocate for the people of Bangladesh and Burma, the Democratic Caucus chair, and my fellow New Yorker.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from New York for yielding me this time. I thank the chair, as well, for his work on this effort. I thank my friend and colleague from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for his work on putting this resolution together. I know Mr. LEVIN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and others, have also expressed a tremendous interest in this issue, and I am very pleased and happy about that.

In late August, after attacks on outposts, Burma's military and security forces launched a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya in Burma. The response has been grossly disproportionate. The attacks by the military against the Rohingya civilians have been systematic, organized, and ruthless.

Amnesty International says:

The Myanmar military has killed hundreds of Rohingya women, men, and children, including babies; raped women and girls; and carried out targeted burning of entire villages.

And that is just what we know of.

The authorities have terrorized the Rohingya people so cruelly that more than 600,000 Rohingya people have fled Burma to neighboring Bangladesh. Even before the attacks, the Rohingya were often effectively denied access to proper healthcare and education, as the chairman has indicated, many just barely getting by.

But the most disturbing thing of all, at least so far, there is no light at the end of this tunnel. Still today, Burma's authorities are blocking adequate humanitarian aid to many who need it, denying critical food aid to many men, women, and children.

As a result, those Rohingya who do remain in Burma are getting hungrier, they are getting weaker, and they are becoming even more vulnerable. But instead of trying to resolve the issue, many authorities are denying that this has happened at all.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have had enough. I think we have all had enough. The United States certainly cannot solve every problem in the world, but there are some things that we can and that we must do. Imposing sanctions against the perpetrators of atrocities in Burma is one of the things that we must do.

Doing so will send an important signal that we are watching and we are not standing by idly. It will signal that we want to see the recommendations of former Secretary General Kofi Annan carried out. It will signal that there is a cost to pay for carrying out atrocities. It will signal that the world won't simply turn away.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum recently released an important report on the Rohingya, called, "They Tried to Kill Us All." The title should say it all, "They Tried to Kill Us All." What clearer message do we need before we act? The time for action is now.

I also want to thank the Government of Bangladesh for the humanitarian relief to the Rohingya people that they have offered.

I want to call on our friend, Aung San Suu Kyi, to do everything that she can to protect the Rohingya from further ethnic cleansing and genocide.

I want to thank Pope Francis for his courage in speaking out and using the term "Rohingya."

I urge all of my colleagues to support this measure.

I thank my colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee for giving this issue the attention that it needs and deserves.

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

Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of what our colleague JOE CROWLEY brought up today, there is new urgency in this argument and new urgency to us getting the point across to the Government of Burma. Let me speak for a minute as to that issue.

Many people at this moment are in grave danger. Many people who are in certain areas in Rakhine State are in danger at this moment. They are at risk of mass killings.

State security forces as well as armed civilian perpetrators stand poised. So the situation right now, it is possible that we have not seen the worst of this in terms of mass killings.

As we speak, the Government of Myanmar confines 120,000 Rohingya men, women, and children to more than 45 internment camps in these eight townships in Rakhine State, which we are most concerned about at this moment. They have been confined for the last 5 years, as we know. They have been denied aid, and they have been, obviously, deprived of their dignity.

Since August 25, the Government of Myanmar has obstructed, as shared with this body today by JOE CROWLEY, has blocked food aid, humanitarian aid to some of these internment camps, systematically weakening that population. They are at grave risk.

This is notice to the Government of Burma. The authorities there continue to block the delivery of this humanitarian aid, this food aid to these women and children. If this does not end now, it will constitute acts of genocide. It must end now.

And also, of course, the authorities there continue to enforce severe restrictions on freedom of movement and severe restrictions on the livelihoods of these people.

It is more than worrisome, the extent to which the Burmese Government and security forces have continued to thwart international observers from moving into these camps and have thwarted international organizations. The world should demand access now for impartial fact finders. Any continued resistance can only reinforce our suspicions that Burma has something to hide and that the evidence will show will constitute acts of genocide if this continues. It must end now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who chairs the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking

Member ENGEL for their leadership in bringing this important resolution to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 90, condemning the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and calling for an end to the attacks in Burma and the immediate restoration of access to humanitarian aid. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution.

I thank our previous speaker, my colleague, JOE CROWLEY, as well as our Republican colleague, STEVE CHABOT, sitting in front of us, for authoring this measure.

We are seeing condemnations of the atrocities occurring in Burma from across the world, Mr. Speaker, as well as calls for the nation's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, to make greater efforts to stop the violence there.

□ 1430

Last month, our U.S. administration issued an official determination that the Burmese military's actions constitute ethnic cleansing, and rightly so. The atrocities being committed against this ethnic minority have been well documented and they deserve the utmost condemnation.

The reality on the ground is shocking, Mr. Speaker. Over 600,000 were forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh; the systematic massacre, the rape, the pillaging, all in an effort to eliminate any trace of these Muslim minorities in Burma.

No one is safe, no Rohingya is safe, yet the world continues to sit back and watch as these individuals are targeted for extinction and eradication from the history books.

We as a United States Congress can do more, we must do more, and we expect responsible nations and responsible actors to do more to end this persecution.

Last week, Pope Francis met with Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's top military commander, delivering the message that these atrocities must be stopped. The Dalai Lama has spoken out against this systematic campaign.

Now it is time for us in the U.S. Congress to add our voice and send a strong message of our own, and this resolution does just that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), my good friend, the senior member of the Ways and Means Committee and a senior member of Congress.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ENGEL for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution. At the same time, I want to express concerns about the full thrust of the resolution.

It makes it clear that the military in Burma is the main perpetrator of the crimes committed against the Rohingya people. In November, Secretary Tillerson called the violence against the Rohingya "ethnic cleansing," holding the military responsible.

Some have urged that Aung San Suu Kyi does not control the military and there is a danger that the military would use the present crisis as a way to dismantle the civilian government. It has also been said that the civilian government is working within a deep traditional bias against the Rohingyas, and some see them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

Others point out the pressure on the civilian government could lead to Burma moving closer to the Chinese. Still others point out that talks about Rohingyas returning to Burma must be afforded time to work out, and the process has only begun.

None of these factors must undermine the realities of the persecution of the Rohingyas. As a U.N. official has stated, it is "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

The Pope was under great pressure to not mention the Rohingyas by name. He expressed his deep concern while visiting the country. Later in Bangladesh, the Pope, being specific, said: "None of us can fail to be aware of the gravity of the situation." He called for ". . . decisive measures to address this grave crisis."

A few years ago, I was part of the codel organized by Leader PELOSI to Myanmar. One of the highlights of the trip was meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been freed after almost 2 decades of house arrest. We discussed her unique role in moving Myanmar toward a nation of freedom, human rights, and peace.

The resolution earlier introduced by Senators MCCAIN and DURBIN expressed the overriding need for the world to step up to the plight of the Rohingyas. I introduced the same resolution in the House. These resolutions reflect what many esteemed historical figures have said.

Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, executed by the Nazis, said: "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil."

Desmond Tutu has said: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

Elie Wiesel said: "We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

I quote the statement of Martin Luther King, who said: ". . . an individual who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it."

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), the chairman of the Committee on Small Business and a senior member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chairman yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 90. This is a bipartisan bill condemning the Burmese military's systemic attacks on the Rohingya in Rakhine State.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank especially Congressman CROWLEY from New

York for working together in a bipartisan manner on this legislation and also with Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL and so many others.

As someone who has chaired the Foreign Affairs Committee on Asia and the Pacific and who has been to Burma and met with Aung San Suu Kyi and followed Burma very closely, what has happened there is truly shocking and disheartening, and really a blot on the world in how this has been handled up to this point in many ways.

The Rohingyas have long been at the fringes of Burmese society and it is no secret that the Burmese military regards them as outsiders who don't even belong in Burma at all. That is why the military used some attacks back in August by a rogue group of Rohingya as a pretext to terrorize the entire Rohingya population.

This campaign of terror and violence has demonically worked. Over 600,000 Rohingyas have fled Burma for Bangladesh, and at least 250,000 of those people are children.

Further, credible human rights organizations and the media have documented numerous horrors and abuses, including rape, murder, and torture. The most unspeakable things have happened there.

Together, these atrocities amount to what has been called "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

Unfortunately, Burma's constitution ensures that the Burmese military controls much of the government in Burma, while Burma's civilian government has proved incapable of taking appropriate action to address this violence. Since the Burmese military began its ethnic cleansing campaign, it has gone on and on.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to support this legislation and to do everything we can to stop these horrors.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), my good friend and the chief deputy whip of our House Democratic leadership.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 90.

I am very grateful for this debate today because we need to raise this issue so the world knows that right before our eyes right now ethnic cleansing is happening halfway around the world in Myanmar.

I was privileged to go 2 weeks ago to both Bangladesh and Myanmar to be an on-the-ground witness to what is going on. In my district, I have probably most of the 1,000 or so Rohingya in the Chicago area and even have in my district the Rohingya Cultural Center, which I visited this weekend with Senator DICK DURBIN, who was also on this congressional delegation.

We listened to people in Bangladesh and we heard about unspeakable atrocities that, in fact, were spoken, and I recorded some of them.

We talked to a 20-year-old woman who was holding her hijab on her face

as she cried and told about, in front of her eyes, how her husband's throat was slit and he was killed, his brother was killed, and then they grabbed the baby out of her arms and, in front of her, killed that child. It was just one of the stories.

We talked to a grandmother and her granddaughter next to her covered with burns that are now scars from a few months ago. She is so scarred that she cannot speak, and her grandmother wishes only that she would be able to talk.

We met with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Hasina, a woman, who we thanked for allowing 620,000 Rohingya to cross into Bangladesh, but they want them to go home. The Bangladeshis want them to go home. Right now that is impossible because villages have been burned and because the almost complete prejudice against the Rohingya people. They won't even use the name Rohingya in Myanmar, in Burma, to refer to these individuals.

Thousands upon thousands of stories like that are coming out of Rakhine State, where the Rohingya made their home.

We thought we were going to be, but we were not permitted to go to the displaced persons camps, which are really prisons, concentration camps in northern Rakhine, where people have been thrown out of their homes, and their homes and jobs destroyed.

We went to Sittwe, the capital of the Rakhine State. We went to what is essentially a ghetto surrounded by barbed wires, blocked by police, where people cannot get healthcare, they can't go to the stores that they used to have in the village, they can't get education. They are running out of rice right now.

This is happening now in the world. We need to do something about it. I am proud of this Congress for standing up today and saying no more ethnic cleansing.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of H. Con. Res. 90. The discrimination and violence imposed on the Rohingya ethnic minority in Burma is brutal, horrific, and preventable.

I do welcome, like the rest of my colleagues, the administration's determination that the attacks against Rohingya are ethnic cleansing, because it certainly is, but I would respectfully submit it certainly rises to the level of genocide.

The Genocide Convention couldn't be clearer: If you look to destroy an ethnic group—there are other categories

as well, but it is all about the group—in whole or in part, and even the thought, the contemplation of doing so can rise to genocide.

Here it is actually happening, and it is happening because of who they are as a group.

I think there needs to be a further refinement of that determination to the point of being genocide.

The responsibility for this humanitarian crisis falls squarely on the Burmese military and, to some extent, on the endemic and widespread intolerance expressed in Burmese society for the Rohingya.

After the State Department's determination of ethnic cleansing, it should not hesitate to impose sanctions against the Burmese military leaders and all others who are responsible for this bloodbath.

Like many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I am deeply concerned that this crisis may destabilize the National League for Democracy's ruling coalition and set back Burma's democratic transition.

I am concerned about China's interests in Burma, because a robust democracy on China's border does not fit the goals of the Chinese leadership, including Xi Jinping.

I am concerned that outside jihadi groups will exploit this situation to open yet another front.

I am concerned, like my colleagues, about the stability of Bangladesh, whose fragile economy must now host well over 500,000 new refugees.

Of course, we are all most concerned about the Rohingya women, children, and men who suffer horribly during this crisis.

The roots of this humanitarian crisis are long. A durable solution for the Rohingya in Burma will be a difficult task, but we must make the effort. As we all know, there are other ethnic minority groups in Burma, including the Karen, the Karenni, and others, who have also faced atrocities over the years at the hands of the Burmese military.

A democratic and multiethnic future should be Burma's best hope for prosperity and stability. The Burmese military remains the obstacle to that future.

□ 1445

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my great pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM), a champion for human rights, especially for the rights of women and girls.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member, and I thank the chairman, as well as the authors of this piece of legislation, Mr. CHABOT and Mr. CROWLEY, for their work on this important issue.

Last month, I visited Burma and Bangladesh on a congressional fact-finding mission. Our visits to refugee camps, our conversations with survivors, made it clear that the persecu-

tion of the Rohingya people in Burma's Rakhine State is a severe humanitarian crisis and demands robust American leadership. This resolution is an important first step in demonstrating that Congress will not tolerate human rights abuses against the Rohingyas.

Our delegation saw, however, there is a path forward. The Burmese Government and the military must fully implement the recommendations of the former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's advisory commission. Burma must work with Bangladesh, and the U.N. must fully work to return voluntarily the Rohingya refugees with guarantee of a safe return and a fair process to allow the Rohingyas to apply for and secure citizenship. That must be established.

Finally, there must be an independent investigation to ensure accountability for the atrocities and the abuses that have taken place.

Mr. Speaker, I saw people suffering in both Burma and in Bangladesh, and the suffering must come to an end. They are crying out for action, and the United States and the international community must help them secure justice. This resolution, this vote today, is just the beginning. I encourage people to support this.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the plight of the Rohingya is not and will not be forgotten. I think we heard it from both sides of the aisle with the impassioned speeches today. Nor will we dismiss the suffering of Burma's many other ethnic groups who have been abused by the Burmese Armed Forces throughout decades of conflict.

Since August, we have seen over 600,000 Rohingya in Burma flee to Bangladesh seeking refuge from Burma's murderous security forces. This ethnic cleansing, and perhaps even genocide, is a direct result of the failure of Burma's Government to protect the rights of all people within their borders.

This resolution calls for the reimposition of targeted sanctions against those responsible for this violence. It is the least we can do. History is watching, so I again urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE for, once again, working with him in a bipartisan fashion.

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

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

I just wanted to, again, thank JOE CROWLEY, our colleague, and Mr. STEVE CHABOT for their work on this measure, and Mr. ELIOT ENGEL as well, our ranking member of the committee. They have all along been leaders on this issue, and I thank them for authoring the measure.

I think all of us know that even before this latest resurgence, this massive displacement, this ethnic cleansing, many considered the Rohingya to

be one of the most persecuted minorities, one of the most persecuted populations on the planet. I think this particular resolution rightly shines a light on the abuses committed against them, calling for an end to all violence.

I urge all Members here, but also I urge the Government of Burma, to consider that we are at a point of crisis. If the government there does not reverse course immediately, it will do irreparable damage to its standing in the world and earn it a place among the most egregious human rights abusers in modern history. So what we ask is a reversal of these policies.

I urge all colleagues to vote in favor, send a clear signal that the U.S. will not turn a blind eye toward these atrocities.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 90.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays. The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 5, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I have made the decision to retire from my position as the Member of the United States House of Representatives from Michigan's Thirteenth Congressional District effective today.

Sincerely,

JOHN CONYERS, Jr.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 5, 2017.

Hon. RICK SNYDER,
Governor of Michigan,
Lansing, MI.

DEAR GOVERNOR SNYDER: I have made the decision to retire from my position as the Member of the United States House of Representatives from Michigan's Thirteenth Congressional District effective today.

Sincerely,

JOHN CONYERS, Jr.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from

Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the whole number of the House is 433.

TAYLOR FORCE ACT

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1164) to condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1164

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Taylor Force Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Palestinian Authority's practice of paying salaries to terrorists serving in Israeli prisons, as well as to the families of deceased terrorists, is an incentive to commit acts of terror.

(2) The United States does not provide direct budgetary support to the Palestinian Authority. The United States does pay certain debts held by the Palestinian Authority and funds programs for which the Palestinian Authority would otherwise be responsible.

(3) The United States Government supports community-based programs in the West Bank and Gaza that provide for basic human needs, such as food, water, health, shelter, protection, education, and livelihoods, and that promote peace and development.

(4) Since fiscal year 2015, annual appropriations legislation has mandated the reduction of Economic Support Fund aid for the Palestinian Authority as a result of their payments for acts of terrorism including, in fiscal year 2017, a reduction "by an amount the Secretary determines is equivalent to the amount expended by the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations with such entities as payments for acts of terrorism by individuals who are imprisoned after being fairly tried and convicted for acts of terrorism and by individuals who died committing acts of terrorism during the previous calendar year".

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

Congress—

(1) calls on the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations to stop payments for acts of terrorism by individuals who are imprisoned after being fairly tried and convicted for acts of terrorism and by individuals who died committing acts of terrorism and to repeal the laws authorizing such payments;

(2) calls on all donor countries providing budgetary assistance to the Palestinian Authority to cease direct budgetary support until the Palestinian Authority stops all payments incentivizing terror;

(3) urges the Palestinian Authority to develop programs to provide essential public services and support to any individual in need within its jurisdictional control, rather than to provide payments contingent on perpetrating acts of violence;

(4) urges the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States at the United Nations to highlight the issue of Palestinian Authority payments

for acts of terrorism and to urge other Member States to apply pressure upon the Palestinian Authority to immediately cease such payments; and

(5) urges the Department of State to use its bilateral and multilateral engagements with all governments and organizations committed to the cause of peace between Israel and the Palestinians to highlight the issue of Palestinian Authority payments for acts of terrorism and to urge such governments and organizations to join the United States in calling on the Palestinian Authority to immediately cease such payments.

SEC. 4. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

(a) LIMITATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For fiscal year 2018 and each of the five subsequent fiscal years, funds authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for assistance under chapter 4 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2346 et seq.; relating to Economic Support Fund) and available for assistance for the West Bank and Gaza that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority may only be made available for such purpose if, except as provided in subsection (d), not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of State certifies in writing to the appropriate congressional committees that the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations—

(A) are taking credible steps to end acts of violence against Israeli citizens and United States citizens that are perpetrated or materially assisted by individuals under their jurisdictional control, such as the March 2016 attack that killed former United States Army officer Taylor Force, a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan;

(B) have terminated payments for acts of terrorism against Israeli citizens and United States citizens to any individual, after being fairly tried, who has been imprisoned for such acts of terrorism and to any individual who died committing such acts of terrorism, including to a family member of such individuals;

(C) have revoked any law, decree, regulation, or document authorizing or implementing a system of compensation for imprisoned individuals that uses the sentence or period of incarceration of an individual imprisoned for an act of terrorism to determine the level of compensation paid, or have taken comparable action that has the effect of invalidating any such law, decree, regulation, or document; and

(D) are publicly condemning such acts of violence and are taking steps to investigate or are cooperating in investigations of such acts to bring the perpetrators to justice.

(2) ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of State shall include in the certification required under paragraph (1) the definition of "acts of terrorism" that the Secretary used for purposes of making the determination in subparagraph (B) of such paragraph.

(b) EXCEPTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the limitation on assistance under subsection (a) shall not apply to—

(A) payments made to the East Jerusalem Hospital Network;

(B) assistance for wastewater projects; and

(C) assistance for any other program, project, or activity that provides vaccinations to children.

(2) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary of State shall notify in writing the appropriate congressional committees not later than 15 days prior to making funds available for assistance under subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of paragraph (1).

(c) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Funds withheld pursuant to this section—

(1) shall be deemed to satisfy any similar withholding or reduction required under any other provision of law relating to the Palestinian Authority's payments for acts of terrorism; and

(2) shall be in an amount that is not less than the total amount required by such other provision of law.

(d) **INITIAL USE AND DISPOSITION OF WITHHELD FUNDS.**—

(1) **PERIOD OF AVAILABILITY.**—Funds withheld pursuant to this section are authorized to remain available for an additional 2 years from the date on which the availability of such funds would otherwise have expired.

(2) **USE OF FUNDS.**—Funds withheld pursuant to this section may be made available for assistance for the West Bank and Gaza that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority upon a certification by the Secretary of State that the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations have met the conditions set forth in subsection (a). Except as provided in paragraph (3), such funds may not be made available for any purpose other than for assistance for the West Bank and Gaza that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority.

(3) **DISPOSITION OF UNUSED FUNDS.**—Beginning on the date that is 180 days after the last day on which the initial availability of funds withheld pursuant to this section would otherwise have expired, such funds are authorized to be made available to the Department of State for assistance under chapter 4 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C.2346 et seq.; relating to Economic Support Fund) for purposes other than assistance for the West Bank and Gaza.

(e) **REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—If the Secretary of State is unable to certify in writing to the appropriate congressional committees that the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations have met the conditions described in subsection (a), the Secretary shall, not later than 15 days after the date on which the Secretary is unable to make such certification, submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains the following:

(A) The reasons why the Secretary was unable to certify in writing that such organizations have met such requirements.

(B) The definition of "acts of terrorism" that the Secretary used for purposes of making the determination in subparagraph (B) of subsection (a)(1).

(C) The total amount of funds to be withheld.

(2) **FORM.**—The report required by this subsection shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

(f) **LIST OF CRITERIA.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a list of the criteria that the Secretary uses to determine whether assistance for the West Bank and Gaza is assistance that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority for purposes of carrying out this section.

(2) **UPDATE.**—The Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an updated list under paragraph (1) not later than 15 days after the date on which the Secretary makes any modification to the list.

SEC. 5. INITIAL REPORT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the

appropriate congressional committees a report describing those programs, projects, and activities funded by the United States Government that have been or will be suspended by reason of withholding of funds under section 4.

(b) **FORM.**—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

SEC. 6. ANNUAL REPORT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 6 years, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report including at a minimum the following elements:

(1) An estimate of the amount expended by the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations during the previous calendar year as payments for acts of terrorism by individuals who are imprisoned for such acts.

(2) An estimate of the amount expended by the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and any successor or affiliated organizations during the previous calendar year as payments to the families of deceased individuals who committed an act of terrorism.

(3) An overview of Palestinian laws, decrees, regulations, or documents in effect the previous calendar year that authorize or implement any payments reported under paragraphs (1) and (2).

(4) A description of United States Government policy, efforts, and engagement with the Palestinian Authority in order to confirm the revocation of any law, decree, regulation, or document in effect the previous calendar year that authorizes or implements any payments reported under paragraphs (1) and (2).

(5) A description of United States Government policy, efforts, and engagement with other governments, and at the United Nations, to highlight the issue of Palestinian payments for acts of terrorism and to urge other nations to join the United States in calling on the Palestinian Authority to immediately cease such payments.

(b) **FORM OF REPORT.**—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

SEC. 7. APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.

In this Act, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. **ROYCE**) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. **ENGEL**) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today we consider the Taylor Force Act. This is bipartisan legislation that honors a courageous and patriotic young American, Taylor Force.

Taylor was an Eagle Scout. He was a West Point graduate who served his country with distinction in Afghanistan and Iraq before he enrolled in Vanderbilt's MBA program. He was a young man with big dreams and loads of potential. Then Taylor's life was tragically cut short at the age of 28 when he was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist while on a business school trip to Israel.

I had the honor of meeting again with Taylor's parents, Stuart and Robbi, who were on Capitol Hill today. They have worked so hard to make this bill a legacy for their son, to ensure that no other family has to experience what they have experienced. They have been so generous with their time, their spirit, their story. We are grateful for all of their efforts, and we wish them comfort as they continue to mourn the heartbreaking loss of their son.

We need to be clear about responsibility for this vicious attack. The Palestinian Authority gives salaries to Palestinians who attack innocent people like Taylor. If the attacker dies, then the attacker's family is compensated under their law. I know it is hard for us to adjust to this, but it is Palestinian law to reward Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails with a monthly paycheck. The Palestinian leadership also pays the families of Palestinian suicide bombers.

It goes without saying that these policies clearly incentivize terrorism. In fact, this perverse pay-to-slay system uses a sliding scale: the longer the jail sentence, in other words, the greater the mayhem created there, the greater the reward. The highest payment goes to those serving life sentences, to those who prove, obviously, most brutal.

This system is a disgrace. It is also the result of an abiding climate of hatred that Palestinian leaders continue to foster toward Jews, toward Israelis.

As one witness told our committee: "Incitement" is the term we usually use, but hatred is what we mean . . . teaching generations of Palestinians to hate Jews by demonizing and dehumanizing them." That is what democratic Israel faces, and it is not getting any better.

Yet, for a generation, we have given economic aid to the Palestinians, in large part, to try to stabilize their society to promote peaceful coexistence between the Palestinians and Israelis. This goal is undermined every day that the PA makes payments for acts of terrorism. This must stop.

This bipartisan bill cuts off assistance that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority unless the PA takes credible steps to end acts of violence,

stops payments for acts of terrorism, revokes the laws requiring these payments, or takes actions comparable to revoking the laws, and publicly condemns these acts of violence.

Our bill also requires consistent reporting to Congress that clearly explains how the administration makes its determinations. If our assistance is being withheld, the administration must report which of the PA's dangerous actions are continuing so that Congress can determine how to apply pressure going forward.

Too many grieving families go to sleep every night knowing that money is changing hands as a reward for violence that killed one of their loved ones.

With this bill, we are using the weight of U.S. law to help see that no more families—American, Israeli, or anyone—join their tragic ranks. We do this in the name of one brave American, Taylor Force, to honor the memories of all victims and, importantly, help prevent future victims. We also do it in the hopes of peace.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, in strong support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank ED ROYCE, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. I agree with everything he said in his remarks. I want to thank him for his hard work on this legislation. We worked closely together to make this bipartisan bill as strong as possible, while also taking care to limit any unintended consequences. That is what we have been doing on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and that is why we have been so successful in passing legislation. We do it in a bipartisan way.

Let me begin by saying that the Palestinian system of so-called martyr payments is downright disgusting. We are talking about a system that involves paying people on a sliding scale based on the death and destruction that they cause. It is simply sickening.

These payments clearly incentivize terrorist attacks, and they further threaten prospects for peace, pushing the chance for a Palestinian state further and further out of reach.

This legislation was named for Taylor Force, an American victim of Palestinian terrorism. He was a West Point graduate and a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was stabbed to death in Jaffa in 2016.

The question we face is: How do we compel the PA, the Palestinian Authority, to end the martyr payment system?

In 2015, appropriations bills began to include language cutting off funds for the Palestinian Authority by the amount that they spent on so-called martyr payments, but that didn't curb the practice.

□ 1500

We stopped giving the Palestinian Authority direct assistance, but the Palestinian Authority hasn't budged.

We are now considering this legislation, which cuts all funds that directly benefit the Palestinian Authority if the Palestinian Authority continues to make these payments. This will make it crystal clear to the Palestinian Authority that so-called martyr payments are unacceptable, period.

At the same time, the bill allows the United States to continue humanitarian and democracy assistance, which is in our interest and the interest of our ally Israel. It also includes a thoughtful exemption proposed by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) which exempts childhood vaccinations from the cuts required under this bill.

Overall, I believe that this version of the Taylor Force Act strikes the right balance. Chairman ROYCE and I worked very hard to come up with a piece of legislation that both sides would support. The Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously passed this legislation. The message should be clear: this is not a partisan issue.

We must send a message to the Palestinian Authority that these so-called martyr payments, which are "killing" payments, must stop.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation that ensures no unintended consequences, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN). He is the author of this important legislation.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is named after Taylor Force, and I wanted to say what a special honor it is that his parents are with us here today.

I would like to especially thank the Speaker and majority leader for bringing this legislation to the floor for a vote. I also want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their leadership and strong bipartisan support.

I introduced this bill last Congress and reintroduced it this Congress with Representative LEE ZELDIN because we absolutely must ensure that American taxpayer dollars don't incentivize terrorist attacks on our own citizens as well as Israelis. This commonsense measure now has 170 cosponsors.

I think most of the American people are aware of Taylor's story by now, but it bears repeating again as we prepare to vote on this legislation in the people's House.

Last year, a 28-year-old American student named Taylor Force was visiting Israel on a school trip. While walking near the beach in Tel Aviv, a 22-year-old Palestinian stabbed him to death in a terrorist attack.

Taylor Force was an Eagle Scout, West Point graduate, and a veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan. He rep-

resents everything any parent could want their son or daughter to be.

As we know, Mr. and Mrs. Force lost their treasured son in this terror attack. They were left with only photographs and memories.

The terrorist who murdered Taylor was killed shortly after by the police, but the killer's family was left with something else: a lucrative financial reward.

The Palestinian Authority, led by President Mahmoud Abbas, gives financial rewards for terrorist attacks. The more people killed in an attack, the higher the financial reward. Families of terrorists receive a pension for life, which is triple the average salary in the West Bank, as well as a receiving free tuition and health insurance, a clothing allowance, and a monthly stipend.

More money goes to these kinds of payments than go to the entire civil service of the Palestinian Authority. This must be stopped.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and send as strong and clear a message as possible that the United States will not allow our taxpayer dollars to be used to incentivize terrorist attacks.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH), the ranking member of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, and a valued member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York, my friend, the ranking member, for yielding.

I rise in support of H.R. 1164, the Taylor Force Act.

Mr. Speaker, the pursuit of a negotiated two-state solution to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires a commitment to peace, but it is impossible for the Palestinian Authority to demonstrate that commitment to peace while paying terrorists for attacks on innocent civilians. But that is the reality today, and that is what this bill seeks to end.

Under current Palestinian law, the PA pays salaries to terrorists and their families more money for worse crimes, typically well exceeding the mean salary for Palestinian workers. If a terrorist is sentenced to life in prison for a horrific attack that kills Israeli citizens, he will get a four-times higher monthly salary than if he had been sentenced to only a couple of years in prison for a lesser attack. This is blatant incentive to terrorism; the same type of terrorism that we have seen tear through buses, shopping malls, nightclubs, and places of worship around the world.

In March of last year, during a surge of deadly stabbings, shootings, and car rammings in Israel, we saw the consequences of this incitement and incentive to terror.

Taylor Force, a 28-year-old American tourist, a West Point graduate and then-Vanderbilt graduate student, who

had fought in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, was stabbed to death on a promenade in Jaffa by a young Palestinian terrorist.

Taylor, by all accounts, was loved and humble. He enjoyed playing the guitar. He was an Eagle Scout and an Army veteran. His father described him as an all-American kid who made sure that everyone around him felt good. A friend of his in Nashville said simply: He made people better.

But rather than unambiguously condemn this attack against innocent civilians, as any responsible government would do, the PA instead has rewarded these types of attacks by paying more than \$1 billion to convicted terrorists over the past decade.

It is the job of the Palestinian Authority, like any responsible government, to deliver services to its people, including welfare to those who need it most, like a grieving widow who suddenly has to take care of her family without the breadwinner. But this is not welfare.

The current law essentially tells Palestinians: If you tragically die in a car accident, your family gets nothing; but if you die driving your car into a group of Israeli civilians, your family will be taken care of for life.

That is not welfare. That is incentive to terror. It is pay for slay, and it must end.

I am proud of the bipartisan manner in which today's bill was crafted, and it is carefully written in a way that targets only those funds that directly benefit the Palestinian Authority, thereby creating real incentives for the PA to end this practice without damaging the vital U.S. investments in humanitarian assistance and grassroots people-to-people programs that are essential to achieving our overall objective of peace.

Taylor Force served our country to advance and protect peace. His life was taken by terrorists seeking to undermine peace.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. DEUTCH. It is our duty to call on the PA to end this indefensible practice of rewarding terror and to demonstrate a real commitment to peace, a peace where Israel can live safely and securely as a Jewish and democratic state next to a Palestinian state that does not seek its destruction.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation honors Taylor Force's name and memory by stopping an abhorrent practice. In his name, and in the name of peace, the PA must end these payments to terrorists, and I urge my colleagues to support this effort to make them stop.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who chairs the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa. She is also our chairman emeritus.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and my good friend, Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, for his hard work. I especially want to thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) for offering this important bill.

Sadly, as we have heard, Mr. Speaker, Taylor Force is the name and the face of the disgusting and reprehensible practice in place by the Palestinians that we know as pay to slay.

Taylor Force, as we have heard, was an Eagle Scout, a West Point graduate, a veteran of two wars, who served our Nation bravely and with distinction. It was a life cut tragically short at 28 years old, when he was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist while in Israel.

While the world condemned this attack and while Taylor Force's friends and family mourn his loss, the Palestinian leaders fail to take responsibility. No, instead, Abu Mazen and the Palestinian leadership continue to incite violence, continue to support terror. Because, make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, as long as the Palestinian Authority or the PLO—whatever name they want to use—make payments to terrorists, they are supporting terror.

How can you conclude otherwise?

It is irresponsible and it is shameful to think that the American taxpayer and the U.S. Government are in any way, shape, or form helping to support this pay-to-slay program. This is why this act will ensure that, until pay to slay is ended, we will not be a willing contributor to the Palestinian scheme. This is just another tool that Congress has given the administration to use in order to hold the Palestinian leaders accountable.

However, I do believe that we should not allow for exceptions, not allow for carve-outs in this important bill, because that flexibility, sadly, is sometimes used to circumvent the spirit of the law and the congressional intent.

I would like to remind our body that the administration already has the tools it needs to withhold assistance to the Palestinian Authority and the West Bank and Gaza, so we must exercise existing authorities and send a message to the Palestinians once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the administration to use all of the tools at its disposal, to not waive provisions of U.S. law, to not selectively enforce some laws and apply others. That means ending all assistance to the Palestinian Authority—all. It means closing the PLO office in D.C. until pay to slay has ended and until the Palestinians stop their incitement and stop their support for terror.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important and tragic measure, and I urge the administration to use these tools that we continue to provide to it. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for rapidly bringing this important bill to the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I think that points have been made on both sides of the aisle with which we all agree. If the Palestinian Authority is serious about peace and is serious about a two-state solution and is serious about living in peace with Israel, then I think they have to be serious about not paying people who murder, not paying people who are terrorists, not paying people who randomly go over and stab somebody.

Taylor Force happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. No other reason. That should not be left to stand. I think our colleagues have all talked about what a wonderful young man he was, an exemplary American, someone who played by the rules, kept his country safe, did the right things, respected his own faith. We should respect him and all the other people as well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER), my friend on the Financial Services Committee, a rising star in Congress.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1164, the bipartisan Taylor Force Act. I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, who is my friend and colleague and a real leader for our party and for this issue, for all of their hard work and leadership to bring this legislation to the floor. All of us in Congress could learn from and emulate their friendship and bipartisan working relationship, especially when it comes to our foreign policy and support for our vital ally Israel, and in our fight against terror around the world.

I commend the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) for introducing this important legislation, and I am proud that Ranking Member ENGEL and I were the very first Democrats in the House to cosponsor this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I serve on the House Financial Services Committee's Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance, where, day in and day out, my colleagues and I track the flow of money to terrorist groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, and ISIS through illicit financial networks.

For years, the Palestinian Authority has shamelessly engaged in an equally heinous practice out in the open: the awarding of official payments to terrorists it inspires to go out and kill innocent civilians, including American citizens like U.S. Army veteran Taylor Force.

Israeli citizens live under the constant threats of stabbings, suicide bombings, and vicious terrorist attacks. Palestinian leaders, including President Abbas, have not just refused to call for an end to these attacks or to speak out against those who promote hate and violence, rather, they celebrate, defend, and promote terrorism through an elaborate system whereby the Palestinian Authority literally "pays to slay."

□ 1515

That is because for decades the PLO and the PA have provided payments in some form or another to terrorists and their families, as well as various other awards and titles and honorifics, but the practice is especially heinous because today it is enshrined into Palestinian law. The deadlier attacks of terrorism will be rewarded with even more money.

I know because I have read the laws and seen the accompanying payment charts. There is literally a payment schedule based on the severity of the terrorist attack, which encourages more severe and gratuitous violence and terrorist activity.

For instance, a terrorist who slayed three people in 2015, including an 18-year-old American citizen, Ezra Schwartz, who was spending his gap year in Israel and planned to attend business school at Rutgers University in New Jersey, would be rewarded by the PA with a monthly salary—the terrorist—of more than \$3,000.

In sum, these payments total hundreds of millions of dollars that the PA redirects from its own budget to pay off the murderers of Jews, Israelis, and foreigners. The Taylor Force Act will eliminate U.S. foreign aid to the West Bank and Gaza that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority until the Secretary of State can guarantee that they have ended these payments. This legislation is carefully targeted to achieve maximum leverage over the PA to end the funding of terror.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation stands in stark contrast to a partisan, one-sided, offensive, and harmful bill recently introduced in Congress under the guise of promoting human rights that would cut aid to Israel for cracking down on terrorism. Israel has the right and obligation to defend itself and its civilians who have been the targeted victims of brutal attacks and murders while going about their daily lives. The United States ought to stand with them by condemning Palestinian incitement.

Members of both parties have been working together to do just that. Since fiscal year 2015, Congress has reduced, dollar for dollar, the amount of money that the PA and PLO pay to terrorists and their families from the Economic Support Fund aid that the U.S. provides. While this has resulted in the reduction of our foreign aid, it has not yet brought an end to this practice.

In May, I joined Representatives CLAUDIA TENNEY and TOM SUOZZI and 33 of our colleagues who demanded that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson address these terror payments directly with Palestinian President Abbas during his visit to Washington, D.C.

It has been suggested that the PA may be more receptive to international pressure. I am glad that this bill urges the Secretary of State and the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations to highlight this issue with the international community to

condemn these horrific acts of violence. But that is simply not enough.

The United States must use every tool at our disposal to counter violence and terrorism. The PLO and the PA may well continue down the path of more hatred, violence, and terror without regard for the damage inflicted or for their role in diminishing the prospects for peace. But so long as they pay citizens to murder civilians, then they will do so without benefiting from the support of the United States taxpayer. There is no question that should be asked about that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in standing in solidarity with the families of the victims of terror to bring an end to this appalling system of paid violence, and I urge support for this bill.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL for, again, working so well together to bring this legislation to the floor; and LEE ZELDIN, one of the principal cosponsors of the bill; and DOUG LAMBORN, of course, the prime author of this legislation.

I, too, am proud to be a cosponsor. This is a very important bill that will serve as a measure of justice for the memory of U.S. Army Officer Taylor Force and many others who have been victimized over the years by Palestinian terrorism subsidized by the Palestinian Authority. It is well past time for us to apply real pressure to the Palestinian Authority for continuing incitement for anti-Israel, anti-Semitic, and anti-American violence. This bill takes aim at the PA's ongoing financial incentivizing of murder.

Mr. Speaker, when you pay someone to kill somebody else and pay their family to kill somebody else, that is a crime. So this just ought to be seen as a step in trying to say we mean business. Those who authorize those payments ought to be held liable for these crimes.

Although 2 years ago Congress deducted the PA's compensatory payments to terrorists and their families from U.S. assistance, there has been no change in the PA's twisted and perverted policy. By conditioning most U.S. assistance to the PA on its commitment to cease payments to terrorists, the Taylor Force Act takes the necessary next and important step to guarantee that American taxpayer dollars are not being used to reward terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, the PA cannot be a partner for peace until it stops subsidizing terrorism. Amidst increasing talk of a new peace initiative in the region, we must be absolutely clear that there could be no true peace until Pal-

estinian public policy stops inculcating a culture of death in the minds of the people.

Years of diplomacy, Mr. Speaker, and public pressure aimed at stemming Palestinian incitement have not succeeded. Congress must act now with the power of the purse.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL), my good friend and valued member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bipartisan Taylor Force Act, which eliminates United States aid to the Palestinians unless they end payments to terrorists. I thank my colleagues, the chair, and the ranking member for their leadership.

Today we are condemning an evil system that rewards terrorists based on how many innocent civilians they maim or kill. In recent decades, 1,600 people have been killed by Palestinian terror attacks, like 17-year-old Liana Sakiyan, a high-spirited girl, a friend to many. On a break from exams, she and her friends were in line for a night of celebration at a discotheque in Tel Aviv when a bomb went off, instantly snuffing out her life and 20 other innocent young Israelis.

As a reward for this heinous attack, the suicide bomber's family received thousands of dollars from the Palestinian Authority—this authority which continues to give hundreds of millions of dollars to terrorists and their families, a part of the so-called martyrs' fund. This legislation, which correctly exempts humanitarian and democracy-promoting programs, tells the Palestinian Authority: No more pay to slay.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN), a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. He is the coauthor of this measure.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to serve on the House Foreign Affairs Committee under the leadership of Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL. I am very grateful that they brought this legislation to the House floor for consideration today.

As a co-chair of the House Republican Israel Caucus, the original cosponsor on this piece of legislation, I would strongly encourage all of my colleagues to support this important bill.

I am thinking of values, what drove Taylor Force to sign up for the United States Military Academy at West Point, to deploy into combat, to protect and defend our freedoms and liberties; willing to lay it all on the line; willing to risk everything for our flag, for our Constitution, not just for family back home.

He is joined here—he is certainly with us in spirit—with his parents, Stuart and Robbi, who are in the gallery, and they know that the legacy of

Taylor Force's service and sacrifice is one that already is showing a change in policy in the interactions between our Nation and those in that region. Because as we think of values, the values of the Palestinian Authority is one that incites violence, that financially rewards terrorism, that treats terrorists like they are heads of state at their funerals and calls them martyrs.

I stand with Taylor Force. The House Foreign Affairs Committee stands with Taylor Force. This entire body, hopefully, when this comes to a vote, stands with the parents of Taylor Force, and our effective and better leveraging of our money because we should not provide \$1 of United States taxpayer funds if that money is going to go towards not only inciting violence, but also financially rewarding terrorism.

The United States taxpayers not only want to make sure that their money isn't going to financially reward Palestinian terrorists when they murder innocent Israelis, but this is also about Americans—U.S. tax dollars going to an entity that financially rewards terror.

I was moved greatly as I was listening to Chairman Emeritus ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN's remarks and the need to use all resources that are available to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Nation's greatest ally and change behavior of those bad actors. Those are the values, and we stand with Taylor Force.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, if there are no other speakers on this side, I am prepared to close. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by saying that this bipartisan legislation seeks to compel the Palestinian Authority to stop incentivizing acts of terrorism against innocent victims, including American Taylor Force.

Now, the encouragement of hooligans and thugs to just randomly try to kill people for no other reason than just to try to perpetrate violence needs to be stopped. While the Palestinian Authority seems to be encouraging knife attacks and terror attacks against Jewish Israelis, it is important to say that being in the wrong place at the wrong time leaves everybody vulnerable. That is what happened to Taylor Force. He wasn't Jewish. He happened to be American, and he happened to be a soldier in a war area and a very good, nice, decent human being. He didn't deserve it.

Nobody deserves to be a victim of terror. But certainly, the victims of terror, if we are going to cry out to help them, we have got to put a stop to this disgusting practice of calling these murderers martyrs. They are not martyrs. They are murderers. They have no regard for human beings. They have no regard for anything. It is time for us to say: Enough is enough.

In this current bill, it allows the United States to avoid any unintended consequences such as the cessation of humanitarian assistance, the right

thing to do. I hope that the Palestinian Authority will use this opportunity to stop these martyr payments, move away from incitement, and move toward a two-state solution. Again, this bipartisan legislation seeks to compel the Palestinian Authority to stop acts of terrorism, to stop aiding and abetting acts of terrorism against innocent victims, including American Taylor Force.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) said that if someone drives their car and hits somebody, nothing happens. But if someone drives their car and kills somebody, they get a martyr payment. There is something perverse about that. There is something just wrong about that. And it is something that the United States needs to put its foot down and say, once and for all: We will not tolerate violence.

Finally, let me say that this bill, aptly named as a tribute to Taylor Force, to his parents whom I had the pleasure of meeting, and to all of the people who knew him—he really was the driving force behind this legislation. Because when we heard what had happened, it was so abhorrent, it was so disgusting, that we felt we needed to get together and do something.

So I want to thank the Force family. I want to thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, especially Chairman ROYCE. This is something that every Member of Congress and both sides of the aisle should vote for.

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

□ 1530

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

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me thank my friend and colleague, ELIOT ENGEL, for his eloquence in explaining the enormity of the tragedy here and the meaning of this terrorism. I think Mr. ENGEL has been such a diligent partner in not only helping us move this bill through, but helping us run the committee in a bipartisan way. I want to thank him at this moment as we pass this act for all of his work on this issue through the legislation and through the hearings. I think it has had an impact in the understanding of the Members here.

I also want to recognize and thank our former colleague, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM. I have talked with him about this issue. He originated this bill in the Senate. I know also how passionately he feels about this, as do ELIOT and myself. I look forward to working with our Senate colleagues to ensure that the bill that we pass here in the House or the Senate bill, either one, the bottom line is that the Taylor Force Act must become law quickly. That is our objective.

The purpose of our aid, as we understand it, is to advance U.S. interests around the world. That is why we give aid. I think all of us can agree that

that does not include paying people to commit crimes of terrorism. The Palestinian Authority is flatout undermining U.S. interests by compensating and incentivizing violence, as articulated by my friend, Mr. ENGEL.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill, which ensures that there are consequences for this disgraceful policy and ensures that the U.S. plays no part, even indirectly, in participating in this behavior. The PA giving compensation for violence is beyond the pale. It is long past time that we treat it that way.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROTHFUS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1164, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VENEZUELA HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DEFENSE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2658) to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people, to defend democratic governance and combat widespread public corruption in Venezuela, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2658

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act of 2017".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Sense of Congress.
- Sec. 4. Requirement for strategy to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela.
- Sec. 5. Requirement for strategy to coordinate international humanitarian assistance.
- Sec. 6. Support for efforts at the United Nations on the humanitarian and political crisis in Venezuela.
- Sec. 7. Support for Organization of American States Inter-American Democratic Charter.
- Sec. 8. Concerns and report on the involvement of Venezuelan officials in corruption and illicit narcotics trafficking.
- Sec. 9. Sanctions on persons responsible for public corruption and undermining democratic governance in Venezuela.
- Sec. 10. Concerns over PDVSA transactions with Rosneft.

Sec. 11. Report on activities of certain governments in Venezuela.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The deterioration of democratic governance and the economic crisis in Venezuela have led to an unprecedented humanitarian situation in which people are suffering from severe shortages of essential medicines and basic food products.

(2) According to the World Health Organization, Venezuela had a shortage of necessary medications and medical supplies of—

- (A) 55 percent in 2014;
- (B) 67 percent in 2015; and
- (C) 75 percent in 2016.

(3) According to a Human Rights Watch 2016 report, it is increasingly difficult for many Venezuelans, particularly those in lower- or middle-income families, to obtain adequate nutrition and there are reports of symptoms of malnutrition, particularly in children.

(4) Maternal deaths in Venezuela increased by 66 percent from 2015 to 2016 while infant deaths increased by 30 percent.

(5) There were 240,000 confirmed malaria cases in Venezuela in 2016—a 76 percent increase over 2015.

(6) A survey—conducted jointly by the Central University of Venezuela, the Andrés Bello Catholic University, and the Simón Bolívar University—found that almost 75 percent of Venezuelans lost an average of at least 19 pounds in 2016 as a result of a lack of proper nutrition amidst the country's economic crisis.

(7) Despite massive shortages of basic foodstuffs and essential medicines, Nicolás Maduro has rejected repeated requests from the Venezuelan National Assembly and civil society organizations to bring humanitarian aid into the country.

(8) The International Monetary Fund has estimated that in Venezuela in 2016 the country's gross domestic product contracted by 12 percent and inflation rate reached 720 percent, and has stated that Venezuela had the worst growth and inflation performance in the world.

(9) The International Monetary Fund has not convened an Article IV Executive Board consultation for Venezuela since September 13, 2004, which greatly limits the extent of information available to the international community about the severity of the Venezuelan economic crisis.

(10) Venezuela's political, economic, and humanitarian crisis is fueling social tensions that are resulting in growing incidents of public unrest, looting, violence among citizens, and an exodus of Venezuelans abroad.

(11) These social distortions are taking place amidst an alarming climate of criminal violence. According to the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, Caracas, Venezuela had the highest per capita homicide rate of any capital city in the world in 2015 at 120 murders per 100,000 citizens.

(12) In 2016, 18,155 Venezuelans submitted asylum requests in the United States, which was the greatest number of requests by any nationality, according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

(13) International and domestic human rights groups, such as Foro Penal Venezolano, recognize more than 600 political prisoners in Venezuela, including opposition leader and former Chacao mayor Leopoldo López, Judge María Lourdes Afiuni, Caracas Mayor Antonio José Ledezma Díaz, National Assembly Deputy Gilber Caro, and former San Cristobal mayor Daniel Ceballos.

(14) According to media accounts, over 125 people lost their lives as the result of public demonstrations and protests in Venezuela since April 2017.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) Nicolás Maduro should permit the delivery of international humanitarian assistance to address the widespread and deeply concerning shortages of essential medicines and basic food products faced by the people of Venezuela;

(2) it is in the best interest of the Venezuelan people for the Government of Venezuela to engage with multilateral institutions to ameliorate the effects of the country's ongoing economic, social, and humanitarian crisis;

(3) Nicolás Maduro should immediately release all political prisoners and respect internationally recognized human rights in order to facilitate the conditions for political negotiations and dialogue in Venezuela;

(4) Nicolás Maduro and the Supreme Tribunal of Justice of Venezuela should take steps to reinstate the full powers and authorities of the National Assembly of Venezuela in accordance with the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

(5) Venezuela's National Electoral Council should establish a specific timeline to hold national, regional, and municipal elections in accordance with the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and allow supervision of credible international electoral observers; and

(6) the United States should support meaningful efforts towards a substantive dialogue through which all parties uphold their commitments and agree to specific deadlines to restore respect for Venezuela's constitutional mechanisms and resolve the country's political, economic, and humanitarian crisis.

SEC. 4. REQUIREMENT FOR STRATEGY TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate a strategy to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela through credible and independent nongovernmental organizations operating in Venezuela or in neighboring countries to alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The strategy required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of how and to what extent the following assistance will be provided:

(A) Public health commodities for Venezuelan health facilities and services, including medicines on the World Health Organization's List of Essential Medicines and basic medical supplies and equipment.

(B) Basic food commodities and nutritional supplements needed to address growing malnutrition and improve food security for the people of Venezuela, with a specific emphasis on the most vulnerable populations.

(C) Technical assistance to ensure health and food commodities are appropriately selected, procured, and distributed, predominantly through local nongovernmental organizations.

(2) An identification of United States Agency for International Development best practices in delivering humanitarian assistance and how such best practices are being utilized in providing humanitarian assistance to Venezuela.

SEC. 5. REQUIREMENT FOR STRATEGY TO COORDINATE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the appropriate United Nations humanitarian agencies should conduct and publish an independent assessment on—

- (1) the extent and impact of the shortages of food and medicine in Venezuela; and
- (2) the efforts needed to resolve such shortages.

(b) STRATEGY.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall submit a multi-year strategy to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives that—

(1) describes how the United States will secure support from international donors, including regional partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela; and

(2) identifies governments that are willing to provide financial and technical assistance for the provision of such humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela and a description of such assistance.

SEC. 6. SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE HUMANITARIAN AND POLITICAL CRISIS IN VENEZUELA.

(a) INITIAL EFFORTS.—The President shall instruct the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations to use the voice and vote of the United States to secure the necessary votes—

(1) to place the humanitarian and political crisis in Venezuela on the agenda at the United Nations; and

(2) to secure a Presidential Statement from the United Nations urging the Government of Venezuela to allow the delivery of humanitarian relief and to lift bureaucratic impediments or any other obstacles so that independent nongovernmental organizations can provide the proper assistance to the people of Venezuela without any interference by such government.

(b) ADDITIONAL EFFORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Government of Venezuela refuses to allow the delivery of humanitarian relief and lift bureaucratic impediments and any other obstacles described in subsection (a)(2), then beginning not later than 30 days after the conclusion of the efforts of the United Nations described in such subsection, the President shall instruct the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations to use the voice and vote of the United States to secure the adoption of a resolution described in paragraph (2).

(2) RESOLUTION DESCRIBED.—The resolution of the United Nations described in paragraph (1) is a resolution—

(A) directing the Government of Venezuela to promptly allow safe and unhindered access for humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, including possible support from neighboring countries; and

(B) calling on the Government of Venezuela to—

- (i) allow the delivery of food and medicine;
- (ii) end human rights violations;
- (iii) agree to free, fair and transparent elections with credible international observers;
- (iv) cease violence; and
- (v) release all political prisoners.

SEC. 7. SUPPORT FOR ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, adopted by the Organization of American States in Lima on September 11, 2001, affirms, “The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.”.

(2) Article 19 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter states “an unconstitutional interruption of the democratic order or an unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime that seriously impairs the democratic order in a member state, constitutes, while it persists, an insurmountable obstacle to its government’s participation in sessions of the General Assembly . . . and other bodies of the Organization.”.

(3) Article 20 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter provides—

(A) “In the event of an unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime that seriously impairs the democratic order in a member state, any member state or the Secretary General may request the immediate convocation of the Permanent Council to undertake a collective assessment of the situation and to take such decisions as it deems appropriate.”; and

(B) “The Permanent Council, depending on the situation, may undertake the necessary diplomatic initiatives, including good offices, to foster the restoration of democracy.”.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) Nicolás Maduro, the National Electoral Council of Venezuela, and the Supreme Tribunal of Justice of Venezuela have carried out systematic efforts to undermine, block, and circumvent the authorities and responsibilities of the Venezuelan National Assembly as mandated in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

(2) such efforts by Nicolás Maduro and the Supreme Tribunal of Justice of Venezuela amount to an unconstitutional alternation of the constitutional regime that seriously impairs the democratic order in Venezuela; and

(3) the Secretary of State, working through the United States Permanent Mission to the Organization of American States, should take additional steps to support ongoing efforts by the Secretary General of the Organization of American States—

(A) to invoke the Inter-American Democratic Charter;

(B) to advance a collective assessment of the situation in Venezuela; and

(C) to promote diplomatic initiatives to foster the restoration of Venezuelan democracy.

SEC. 8. CONCERNS AND REPORT ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF VENEZUELAN OFFICIALS IN CORRUPTION AND ILLICIT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The deterioration of governance in Venezuela has been exacerbated by the involvement of senior officials of the Government of Venezuela, including members of the National Electoral Council, the judicial system, and the Venezuelan security forces, in acts of corruption and illicit narcotics trafficking and related money laundering.

(2) In March 2015, the Department of the Treasury’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network determined that approximately \$2,000,000,000 had been siphoned from Venezuela’s public oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela S.A., in conjunction with its designation of the Banca Privada d’Andorra as a Foreign Financial Institution of Primary Money Laundering Concern.

(3) On August 1, 2016, General Nestor Reverol, Venezuela’s current Minister of Interior and former National Guard com-

mander, was indicted in a United States district court for participating in an international cocaine trafficking conspiracy.

(4) On November 18, 2016, Franqui Francisco Flores de Freitas and Efraim Antonio Campo Flores, nephews of Nicolás Maduro and Venezuelan First Lady Cilia Flores, were convicted in a United States district court on charges of conspiring to import cocaine into the United States.

(5) On February 13, 2017, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control designated Tareck Zaidan El Aissami Maddah for his involvement in illicit narcotics trafficking, pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (21 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.; title VIII of Public Law 106-120).

(6) The Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control has designated additional individuals and senior Venezuelan officials for their involvement in illicit narcotics trafficking, pursuant to such Act, including—

(A) Venezuelan national Samark Jose Lopez Bello, who is the primary front man and money launderer for Tareck Zaidan El Aissami Maddah;

(B) Hugo Armando Carvajal Barrios, who is the current National Assembly Deputy and the former Director of Venezuela’s Military Intelligence Directorate;

(C) Henry de Jesus Rangel Silva, who is the current Governor of Trujillo State and the former Director of Venezuela’s Directorate of Intelligence and Prevention Services;

(D) Ramon Emilio Rodriguez Chacin, who previously served as the Minister of Interior; and

(E) Freddy Alirio Bernal Rosales, who previously served as the Mayor of the Libertador municipality of Caracas.

(7) On September 12, 2017, Ambassador William Brownfield testified before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control that drug trafficking organizations in Venezuela have “completely penetrated virtually every security, law enforcement, and justice-related institution” and that “there will be no long-term, democratic, prosperous and secure solution in Venezuela until there is a solution to the drug trafficking organization presence”.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CORRUPTION.—The term “corruption” means the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including by bribery, nepotism, fraud, or embezzlement.

(2) GRAND CORRUPTION.—The term “grand corruption” means corruption committed at a high level of government that—

(A) distorts policies or the central functioning of the country; and

(B) enables leaders to benefit at the expense of the public good.

(c) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, acting through the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and in consultation with the intelligence community (as defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4))), shall submit a report to Congress that describes the involvement of senior officials of the Government of Venezuela, including members of the National Electoral Council, the judicial system, and the Venezuelan security forces, in acts of corruption in Venezuela, with a specific emphasis on acts of grand corruption.

(2) ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) describe how the acts of corruption described in the report pose direct challenges for United States national security and international security;

(B) identify individuals that frustrate the ability of the United States to combat illicit narcotics trafficking; and

(C) include input from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Office of Foreign Assets Control, and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network.

(3) FORM.—The report under paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex. The unclassified portion of the report shall be made available to the public.

SEC. 9. SANCTIONS ON PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC CORRUPTION AND UNDERMINING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN VENEZUELA.

(a) FINDING.—Executive Order 13692 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note), which was signed on March 8, 2015, established sanctions against individuals responsible for undermining democratic processes and institutions and involved in acts of public corruption that were not included in the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-278).

(b) SANCTIONS.—Section 5 of the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-278) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “or” at the end;

(B) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (5);

(C) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

“(3) is responsible for, or complicit in, ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, significant actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions;

“(4) is a government official, or a senior associate of such an official, that is responsible for, or complicit in, ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, acts of significant corruption, including the expropriation of private or public assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, bribery, or the facilitation or transfer of the proceeds of corruption to foreign jurisdictions; or”;

and

(D) in paragraph (5) (as redesignated), by striking “paragraph (1) or (2)” and inserting “paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (4)”;

and

(2) in subsection (e), by striking “December 31, 2019” and inserting “December 31, 2022”.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the President and Secretary of State should seek to encourage partner countries of the Organization of American States, the European Union, and the United Nations to impose sanctions with respect to Venezuelan individuals that are similar to sanctions imposed by the United States with respect to such Venezuelan individuals.

SEC. 10. CONCERNS OVER PDVSA TRANSACTIONS WITH ROSNEFT.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) In late 2016, Venezuelan state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (referred to in this section as “PDVSA”), through a no-compete transaction, secured a loan from Russian government-controlled oil company Rosneft, using 49.9 percent of PDVSA’s American subsidiary, CITGO Petroleum Corporation, including its assets in the United States, as collateral. As a result of this transaction, 100 percent of CITGO is held as collateral by PDVSA’s creditors.

(2) CITGO, a wholly owned subsidiary of PDVSA, is engaged in interstate commerce and owns and controls critical energy infrastructure in 19 States in the United States, including an extensive network of pipelines, 48 terminals, and 3 refineries, with a combined oil refining capacity of 749,000 barrels per day. CITGO’s refinery in Lake Charles,

Louisiana is the sixth largest refinery in the United States.

(3) The Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on Rosneft, which is controlled by the Russian Government, and its Executive Chairman, Igor Sechin, following Russia's military invasion of Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014.

(4) The Department of Homeland Security has designated the energy sector as critical to United States infrastructure.

(5) The growing economic crisis in Venezuela raises the probability that the Government of Venezuela and PDVSA will default on their international debt obligations, resulting in a scenario in which Rosneft could come into control of CITGO's United States energy infrastructure holdings.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) control of critical United States energy infrastructure by Rosneft, a Russian government-controlled entity currently under United States sanctions, would pose a significant risk to United States national security and energy security;

(2) the President should take all necessary steps to prevent Rosneft from gaining control of critical United States interstate energy infrastructure;

(3) a default by PDVSA on its loan from Rosneft, resulting in Rosneft coming into possession of PDVSA's United States CITGO assets, would warrant careful consideration by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States;

(4) if PDVSA defaults on its debt obligations, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control should review CITGO's transactions with United States persons to assess and ensure compliance with United States sanctions policies and regulations; and

(5) the Department of Homeland Security should conduct an assessment of the security risks posed by foreign control of CITGO's United States energy infrastructure holdings and keep the relevant committees of Congress fully informed of its findings and any subsequent strategy to address vulnerabilities to United States energy security as a result.

SEC. 11. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF CERTAIN GOVERNMENTS IN VENEZUELA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, acting through the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State and in consultation with the intelligence community, shall submit to Congress a report that describes the full extent of cooperation by the Governments of the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, Cuba, and Iran with the Government of Venezuela and the Venezuelan armed forces.

(b) FORM.—The report under subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex. The unclassified portion of the report shall be made available to the public.

(c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term "intelligence community" has the meaning given such term in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days

to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill represents broad bipartisan concern here in the House for the worsening humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. It calls on the Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator to develop a humanitarian assistance strategy to help the people of Venezuela.

As the authoritarian Venezuelan Government digs in its heels and consolidates its power, the people of that once wealthy nation, last year, experienced a 65 percent increase in maternal mortality, a 30 percent increase in infant mortality, and a 76 percent increase in malaria cases.

Severe shortages of basic medicine persists. They have right now about 5 percent of the basic medicines that they used to have. A 2016 report shows that three out of every four Venezuelans had lost an average of 19 pounds due to lack of proper nutrition and due to lack of food.

Despite all of this, President Maduro continues to deny the existence of a full-fledged humanitarian crisis while blaming any hardships on his opposition or the international community that seeks only to support the people of Venezuela in their pursuit of democracy and basic human rights.

I applaud the administration for sanctioning those in the Maduro regime complicit—complicit—in the rampant corruption and anti-democratic measures that have stifled the will of the people there. But we must address the specter of the complete collapse of the Venezuelan economy and the resulting humanitarian crisis.

I encourage my colleagues to support this measure by Mr. DESANTIS, which will require a strategy to address the crisis while signaling bipartisan support for the democratic and human rights aspirations of the people of Venezuela.

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

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, December 5, 2017.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I write with respect to H.R. 2658, the "Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Democratic Governance." As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions within H.R. 2658 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I forego any further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 2658 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation and that our committee will be appro-

priately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 2658 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 4, 2017.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2658, the Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act of 2017, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

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

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 2658 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I authored this bill, the Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act, in the House with our chair emeritus of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. I want to say that there is no Member of this body who has done more to champion democracy and human rights in Venezuela than the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

I also want to thank her longtime staff director, Eddy Acevedo, who is in his last week on Capitol Hill. Eddy has been such a positive force on Venezuela and the entire Latin American region in support of ILEANA's work. He has been a consistent collaborator with my staff, and his work here will be sorely missed.

I also want to say that I appreciate Chairman ROYCE's steadfast commitment to the Venezuelan people and his support for this legislation.

I also want to thank Senator CARDIN for authorizing this measure in the other body. I hope we will be able to work with the Senate, the other body, to get this bill on the President's desk.

Mr. Speaker, with its massive energy resources, Venezuela should be one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Unfortunately, irresponsible policies put in place by President Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chavez, brought the country to near economic collapse and created a dangerous humanitarian crisis.

The statistics tell a tragic story. Maternal deaths in the country increased by 66 percent from 2015 to 2016, while infant deaths increased by 30 percent. There were 240,000 confirmed malaria cases in Venezuela in 2016, which is a 76 percent increase over 2015.

A survey carried out by three reputable Venezuelan universities found that nearly three-quarters of Venezuelans lost an average of at least 19 pounds in 2016 as a result of lack of proper nutrition.

Despite massive shortages of food and medicine, President Maduro continues to reject efforts to bring humanitarian assistance into the country. Last summer, Mr. Maduro handed control of the country's food supply over to the Venezuelan military, and while many Venezuelans starve, some of the military brass are making money hand over fist by selling the country's scarce food supplies on the black market. That is like letting the fox into the chicken coop.

In short, President Maduro is running Venezuela into the ground. It is horrific for that country's people, and it is a concern for our own security as this country in our neighborhood becomes less and less stable. So I support targeted sanctions that hold corrupt and abusive Venezuelan officials accountable.

But that must be only a part of our policy. We also must be focused on getting food and medicine to those in most need in the country. This bill calls on the USAID and the State Department to develop a strategy to provide humanitarian assistance to Venezuela while at the same time instructing our Ambassador of the United Nations to work with partners at the U.N. Security Council and throughout the U.N. system to multilaterally address the country's crisis.

This is urgent business, Mr. Speaker. We need to put U.S. aid, the USAID, and the United Nations on a path toward providing much-needed humanitarian assistance to the Venezuelan people. We want to choke off the government. The government is a cancer on the Venezuelan people, but we don't want to hurt the Venezuelan people. That is what the legislation is all about. That is why I wrote it, that is why I authored it, and that is why we agree on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and myself. It is important legislation.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. ELIOT ENGEL for authoring this bill along with

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. I also thank ALBIO SIRES and RON DESANTIS, the cosponsors of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who is the chairman emeritus of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the primary Republican cosponsor of this bill.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time, and I thank the ranking member for those very sweet words.

Mr. Speaker, I echo what Ranking Member ENGEL said about my trusted staff director, Eddy Acevedo. This is his last week with us. He starts Monday with the USAID. He has got the whole weekend to party on. He has been my partner in all of these battles in favor of freedom and democracy and against autocratic regimes, which brings us to this bill before us, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in strong support of this bill, H.R. 2658, the Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act of 2017. I am proud to be, as the chairman said, the Republican lead on this important legislation.

I have been proud to work side by side with the author of the bill, our ranking member on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ELIOT ENGEL, in putting this bill together. ELIOT has been a leading voice in this legislative body in support of freedom and democracy across the globe, as has our esteemed chairman. But ELIOT has really focused in on this hemisphere, especially on Venezuela. I want to thank him for his leadership on this issue.

I also want to thank his trusted adviser sitting two seats away from him on all Western Hemisphere-related items. Eric Jacobstein is my buddy from Haiti. We have enjoyed as much as one can enjoy going to an island nation that needs so much help. The people of Haiti are beautiful, and it has been a joy to travel with Eric and with Eddy. Throughout the years, Eric has worked closely with us and with our office. We work in a bipartisan manner. That is the tone that our esteemed chairman has set for the committee. Eric and ELIOT work that way as well. Their knowledge and expertise on this topic has been instrumental to our committee.

The bill before us, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2658, is simple, it is straightforward, and it is important. Maduro, like Chavez before him—two thugs—has turned Venezuela from a once vibrant and thriving nation into a country on the brink of utter collapse. The results have been disastrous for the people of Venezuela. There is food shortage, there is water shortage, and there is a severe lack of medicine and medical supplies. There is a lack of goods and services everywhere you turn.

The people need to get proper nutrition. They need proper care, but they can't find it. It is a crisis that Maduro and his thugs have denied exists be-

cause he is eating very well. The other day he was making a televised public declaration. He opens up the drawer, takes an empanada, and he is stuffing his face. But the people are starving. But recognizing it would mean that Chavismo has utterly failed, so they refuse to recognize this.

So what happens?

The Venezuelan people suffer from severe malnutrition. They are subject to price controls. It is unbelievable the prices of items there. If they can ever get the food, if they can ever get the services they need, then the people can't afford them. They are subject to substandard and unhygienic conditions. This has led to a sharp rise in infant mortality, and really mortality rates across the board in Venezuela have gone up.

In short, the majority of the people in Venezuela are living in misery. What was once the breadbasket of the whole hemisphere, now the people don't have food. They are living in misery. The Maduro regime is not only to blame, but it is ensuring that the humanitarian situation gets even worse. It was Maduro who ordered the supreme court to block a law from the opposition that would have helped facilitate humanitarian aid from NGOs and other international entities. As a result, it is ever so difficult to get the supplies needed to respond to this crisis into Venezuela to the people who so desperately need it. That is why, Mr. Speaker, this bill is so important.

□ 1545

It directs USAID, the institution Eddy will be a partner of in just a few days, and our great Department of State to develop a plan in order to determine if and how the U.S. can possibly help with some of the humanitarian assistance through credible and independent NGOs, or nongovernmental organizations, that are operating in Venezuela or neighboring countries to ensure that this assistance does get to the people who desperately need it.

The bill also directs our Ambassador to the United Nations to use our full voice, full vote, and full influence of the United States to place the humanitarian and political crises in Venezuela on the agenda at the U.N.

Mr. Speaker, this body, alongside our friends in New York at the U.N., has worked to hold rogue regimes accountable for failing to allow humanitarian assistance in their countries. Whether it is Syria or Yemen, this body has spoken in a unified manner that humanitarian assistance should not be prevented from reaching the people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from Florida an additional 1 minute.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. But on Venezuela, Mr. Speaker, it seems as if we hold a different standard, and that is

unacceptable. For too long, Venezuela has been shielded from criticism and action at the U.N. by its cronies, like the equally corrupt and morally reprehensible Castro regime in Cuba.

This is precisely the kind of situation for which the U.N. was created to respond; yet, to date, the response has been woefully inadequate and shamefully void of substance.

We have got to lead on this effort, and this bill is what we need. There are millions of people suffering in Venezuela. We are in a situation to help.

I would point out to our chairman and the ranking member that we had some excellent news in the minutes that we have been speaking. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the nomination of our former committee chief of staff, Yleem Poblete, for Assistant Secretary of State for Verification and Compliance. It now goes to the full Senate. I know that she will be with us on these measures that attack atrocious regimes and will help alleviate the humanitarian crisis.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREs), my good friend and a valued member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2658, the Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act.

I thank Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL and Chairman ROYCE for all their hard work and always being there for the people of Venezuela.

Of course, I want to thank the dynamic duo of Eddy Acevedo and ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. Even though we are going miss Eddy, I am sure he will continue to fight in the defense of human rights wherever he is.

The situation in Venezuela continues to deteriorate. A country with the world's largest known oil reserves is spiraling into a collapsed state. We have people struggling just to survive. Journalists and citizens risk their lives every day to report what is happening inside Caracas and around the country.

We see that tensions are growing and government security forces shoot first and ask questions later. It is clear that the failed Chavismo policies and the authoritarian actions of Nicolas Maduro have brought all of this pain and suffering upon the Venezuelan people.

Maduro and his cronies continue to get rich as they traffic money and drugs while doing nothing to help the millions of suffering people. Multiple news reports confirm a growing health crisis as people lack access to basic medicines, and reports of infant mortality rates and preventable diseases such as malaria are on the rise.

To hold the Maduro regime accountable, both the Obama and Trump administrations have sanctioned senior officials in the Venezuelan Government

for their actions with narcotrafficking, money laundering, and other illicit activities.

There is consensus among the majority of the hemisphere—multilateral institutions such as the OAS, the United Nations, and the European Union—that Maduro is destroying democracy and violating human rights.

These sanctions are not against the Venezuelan people but are carefully crafted and targeted toward the individuals who are committed to destroying the lives of millions of innocent civilians in exchange for money and power.

That is why I am supporting this important and timely legislation that helps to address the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Venezuela and codifies President Obama's sanctions related to corrupt officials in the country. The United States needs to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Venezuelan people and be ready to assist them, while holding the corrupt regime officials accountable.

Once again, I thank my colleagues for all their hard work on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2658.

Before I yield back, I wish Eddy good luck. I thank him for all his hard work. He will be missed. I hate to see that dynamic duo split, but I am sure it will continue to work.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, Mr. SIREs is not alone.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and a cosponsor of this bill.

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in strong support of Mr. DESANTIS' resolution, H. Res. 259, and Mr. ENGEL's bill, H.R. 2658, which both speak to the ongoing political economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela under the dictatorship of Nicolas Maduro.

Once the richest country in South America, Venezuela now has a total unpaid bond debt of over \$1 billion and is in default on multiple loans.

The Maduro regime is responsible for widespread human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, mass arbitrary detentions, and torture of the political opposition. They have detained five Citgo executives who are dual U.S.-Venezuelan citizens, as well as U.S. citizen and religious missionary Joshua Holt, who remains unjustly imprisoned.

American adversaries are among the main supporters of Venezuela. More than a dozen high-ranking Cuban officers as well as thousands of Cuban intelligence agents are reportedly in Venezuela.

Venezuela continues to receive financial support from Russia and China. Venezuela also possesses 5,000 Russian-made, man-portable surface-to-air missiles and is the largest operator of Russian arms and military hardware in Latin America.

The humanitarian crisis is not limited to Venezuela alone. The crisis in

Venezuela has led to mass immigration. Last year, the U.S. received 18,000 requests from Venezuelans seeking to escape the brutal regime. Waves of Venezuelan refugees have also fled to Chile, Argentina, Colombia, and Brazil, threatening to create a regionwide migration crisis.

The regime refuses to accept humanitarian aid from the international community, preferring instead to use its citizens as political pawns at the expense of their health and safety.

I commend the efforts of the Trump administration to take a principled stand to support the Venezuelan people and sanction the most dangerous actors in the Venezuelan Government. Just yesterday, the regime threatened that elections in Venezuela would only take place if these sanctions were lifted. I wholeheartedly reject this threat and remain committed to the sanctions and to continuing to put pressure on the Maduro regime.

I express my strong support for these two bills. The U.S. supports a free, democratic, and independent Venezuela that is accountable to the people. We stand ready to assist the Venezuelan people and provide humanitarian assistance, and we urge more action from our partners in the region and the international community to resolve the crisis in Venezuela.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), my good friend and a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise to commend my sister in so many fights, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, whom we will miss. But we are not letting her get away that quickly, because we have about a year together with many fights and fun to engage in.

I am here this afternoon to talk about something not very pleasant, and that is the absolute necessity to adopt H.R. 2658, the Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act of 2017.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. SIREs have introduced this legislation, rightfully, because the Maduro regime has repeatedly demonstrated that they have no respect for political freedom, human rights, or even the basic needs of their own citizens. The consequences for the Venezuelan people are becoming more and more devastating every day.

It is absolutely unconscionable that the Maduro regime is refusing to allow food, medicine, and other essential supplies to reach Venezuelans in need. This bill would be a valuable step to ensure that the Venezuelan people are helped, even if their government would prefer that people die rather than receive aid from the international community.

The sanctions that have been imposed thus far against the perpetrators

in the Maduro regime have been steps in the right direction, but we must do more. The Venezuelan Government has demonstrated time and time again that they won't do the right thing on their own, so we must continue to apply stronger and stronger pressure. This legislation would strengthen the President's ability to tighten the screws on Maduro and his cronies.

In order for Venezuela to return to peace and prosperity, its democracy must be restored and strengthened. Elections under the Maduro regime have been manipulated and undermined, and it is absolutely essential that next year's Presidential election proceeds freely and fairly.

That is why it is so urgent that we pass this bill into law to empower the State Department to work with our allies and partners and the Venezuelan people to help them take their country back.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from Florida an additional 1 minute.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Many Venezuelans have fled the chaos in their country to freedom and safety in my congressional district. The significant infusion of our Venezuelan friends and neighbors has affectionately dubbed my hometown of Weston, Florida, as Westonzuela.

We have welcomed them to our community, but we are committed to joining them in the fight for their country and for their friends and family members who remain there in the fight. This legislation is an important step in that battle, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

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

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

In closing, I emphasize again that Venezuela is in crisis and we cannot wait any longer to take action. By passing the Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act, we can begin to provide the Venezuelan people with the resources they so desperately need.

But the United States, obviously, cannot do this alone. Sustained leadership is needed to address the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela from the U.N. Secretary General, members of the Security Council, and other international partners.

It is easy to talk about another country in the abstract, but these are human beings who are dying and sick. They are human beings just like us, and it behooves us to make sure that, while we condemn the brutality of the regime that has a stranglehold on that country, we feel only sympathy for the people. That is what this bill tries to address.

So I again urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I want to again commend my partner from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN,

who has done so much work with me through the years, and our chairman, ED ROYCE, whom it has been a real pleasure to work with.

This is another example of important bipartisan legislation that comes out of the Foreign Affairs Committee. I think that we set a dialogue and a blueprint for people coming together and working together. I think that is what the American people want to see.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1600

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues—Mr. ENGEL, the author, and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, the cosponsor of this measure—for their leadership and for bringing the bill here to the floor.

The world has watched with great sadness as President Maduro continues to run his country into the ground, denying his citizens access to basic food and denying them access to medicine. His obsession with consolidating power has resulted in Venezuela's economic collapse, and it is a collapse created by his wrongheaded populist and socialist mismanagement that has left his country in dire economic straits.

Even more disturbing to me is that Maduro's lieutenants continue lining their pockets while Venezuelan citizens go without food and medicine. This bill reiterates this body's support for the people of Venezuela by instructing relevant U.S. agencies to develop a strategy to address their immediate humanitarian needs, while supporting democracy and human rights.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2658, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

EXPRESSING CONCERN AND CONDEMNATION OVER THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 259) expressing concern and condemnation over the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 259

Whereas in Venezuela, President Nicolas Maduro controls the Presidency, a majority of the municipalities, the Supreme Court, the military leadership, and the leadership of *Petróleos de Venezuela* (PDVSA), and has gutted the National Assembly of the power it constitutionally holds;

Whereas in late October 2016, Venezuela's state courts and National Electoral Council, which are comprised of political allies of President Maduro, halted efforts to hold a referendum pursuant to provisions of the Venezuelan constitution to recall President Maduro, thereby denying the Venezuelan people the ability to pursue a democratic solution to Venezuela's crisis;

Whereas Venezuela's National Electoral Council postponed elections for governors and mayors scheduled for December 2016 and has not set a date to reschedule these elections;

Whereas there have been several attempts at dialogue between President Maduro and the opposition over the past year, which have all failed to yield tangible results;

Whereas the Government of Venezuela continues to silence its citizens through political arrests, with more than 444 political prisoners currently in jail;

Whereas Joshua Holt, a United States citizen, remains imprisoned in Venezuela with no due process, and four postponed hearings to date;

Whereas in its 2016 report, Venezuela's Violence Observatory assessed a widespread use of firearms by criminals and increased use of violence by police and military officials, contributing to a homicide rate of 91.8 per 100,000 residents, making Venezuela one of the most violent countries in the world;

Whereas police and military raids have led to widespread allegations of human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, mass arbitrary detentions, torture, forced evictions, and arbitrary deportations;

Whereas Venezuela is immersed in a deep economic crisis, with shortages of basic food supplies and medicines, and inflation estimated to top roughly 1,600 percent in 2017, according to the International Monetary Fund;

Whereas the Venezuelan military controls the production and distribution of basic food supplies, which has enabled corruption, fraud, and food trafficking, and exacerbated shortages throughout the country;

Whereas deteriorating conditions in health care persist, with the World Health Organization estimating that there are shortages of 75 percent of necessary medications and medical supplies, up from 55 percent in 2014 and 67 percent in 2015;

Whereas a recent survey—conducted jointly by the Central University of Venezuela, the Andrés Bello Catholic University and the Simón Bolívar University—found that almost 75 percent of Venezuelans lost an average of at least 19 pounds in 2016 as a result of a lack of proper nutrition amidst the country's economic crisis;

Whereas the country is facing increasing outbreaks of previously eradicated diseases, such as malaria and diphtheria;

Whereas the Health Ministry in Venezuela published an epidemiological bulletin in May 2017 (the first since 2015), showing a 30 percent increase in infant mortality, a 66 percent rise in maternal mortality, and a 76 percent increase in malaria cases;

Whereas the deteriorating conditions in Venezuela have prompted tens of thousands

of Venezuelans to flee to countries throughout the Western Hemisphere, including Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Panama, Perú, and the United States, which threatens a wider refugee crisis in the region;

Whereas there were 18,000 asylum requests from Venezuelans seeking to enter the United States in 2016, which according to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services was the highest number of requests made by any nationality last year;

Whereas the Government of Venezuela has regulated and reduced the number of local and international media outlets with opposing views, including CNN en Español following its broadcast of a report alleging that Vice President Tareck El Aissami was directly linked to a ring of fraudulent Venezuelan passports provided to foreigners including known members of the terrorist organization Hezbollah;

Whereas, on February 13, 2017, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control designated Venezuela's Vice President Tareck Zaidan El Aissami Maddah as a Specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act for playing a significant role in international narcotics trafficking, and imposed sanctions on Mr. El Aissami and froze his assets in the United States;

Whereas, on March 23, 2017, fourteen Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) published a joint statement calling for the Government of Venezuela to hold elections, restore the constitutional powers of the National Assembly, and release political prisoners;

Whereas, on March 28, 2017, the OAS Permanent Council agreed by a vote of 20 in favor, 11 against, 2 abstentions, and 1 absent/nonvoting Member States to move forward in discussing the situation in Venezuela;

Whereas, on March 28, 2017, the Supreme Court of Venezuela stripped opposition leaders of the National Assembly of their parliamentary immunity and began to take steps to consider prosecuting them for treason;

Whereas, on March 29, 2017, the Venezuelan Supreme Court seized power from the democratically elected National Assembly and nullified the legislative branch's ability to function;

Whereas, on March 31, 2017, in the first major break of a sitting Venezuelan public official, Venezuelan Attorney General Luisa Ortega Diaz affirmed the Supreme Court's actions "had broken constitutional order";

Whereas, on March 31, 2017, Venezuelan citizens took to the streets protesting the Supreme Court's breach of power;

Whereas, on April 1, 2017, the Supreme Court reversed its earlier decisions taking over the National Assembly's legislative powers and stripping the legislators of their parliamentary immunity;

Whereas, on April 26, 2017, the Government of Venezuela announced its intent to withdraw from the OAS;

Whereas on May 1, 2017, President Maduro announced a national vote to create a Constituent Assembly to rewrite the Venezuelan Constitution of 1999, which OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro stated (in testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate on July 19, 2017) was "imposed by decree without the people and against the people, setting the will of the dictatorship above the popular will expressed through universal and direct vote";

Whereas, on May 2, 2017, the Department of State stated, "We have deep concerns about the motivation for this constituent assembly, which overrides the will of the Venezuelan people and further erodes Venezuelan democracy";

Whereas peaceful protests by Venezuelan citizens since March of 2017 have been met with violence from Venezuelan authorities that has caused 100 deaths;

Whereas, on May 17, 2017, the United Nations Security Council met to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela;

Whereas, on May 18, 2017, the Department of the Treasury announced United States sanctions against eight Venezuelan Government officials, all members of Venezuela's Supreme Court, pursuant to Executive Order 13692, for their responsibility in issuing a number of rulings that "interfere with or limit the National Assembly's authority" and that "limit the ability of the National Assembly to conduct its constitutional duties";

Whereas, on May 23, 2017, President Maduro signed a document formally establishing the terms for electing members of a Constituent Assembly, presenting the proposed body as a way to rewrite the Constitution;

Whereas, on June 2, 2017, President Maduro pledged to hold a referendum on the proposed new constitution;

Whereas, on June 20, 2017, the OAS General Assembly meeting was held in Cancun, Mexico, where a resolution regarding the precarious situation in Venezuela failed to gain the votes needed for passage;

Whereas Venezuela's Attorney General Luisa Ortega Diaz is being legally pursued for defying President Maduro, with the Supreme Court banning her from leaving the country and freezing her assets;

Whereas, on July 8, 2017, opposition leader Leopoldo López was released from prison but remains under house arrest;

Whereas, on July 16, 2017, more than seven million people cast votes in a popular consultation to reject the Constituent Assembly;

Whereas, on July 19, 2017, Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro, issued a third report on the crisis in Venezuela which documented the violations of the constitution and systemic violations of human rights by the Government of Venezuela and calling for the immediate suspension of the Constituent Assembly, the cessation of violent repression, the opening of a channel for humanitarian assistance, and the release of political prisoners;

Whereas, on July 20, 2017, the government-controlled Venezuelan Supreme Court annulled the process of the appointment of judges by the opposition-controlled National Assembly;

Whereas, on July 30, 2017, the Government of Venezuela convened the Constituent Assembly, which, on August 18, 2017, assumed lawmaking powers to supersede Venezuela's legitimate National Assembly; and

Whereas the Constituent Assembly voted to remove Luisa Ortega Diaz from her position of Attorney General on August 5, 2017, and to replace her with Tarek William Saab, who was sanctioned by the United States Department of the Treasury on July 26, 2017, along with 12 other current and former senior officials of the Government of Venezuela: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) urges the Government of Venezuela to heed the calls of the international community without delay to hold free, fair, and open elections, release all political prisoners, including United States citizens, respect the constitutional rights of the National Assembly, and open a channel for international humanitarian assistance and medicines;

(2) urges Organization of American States (OAS) Member States to continue all efforts to support the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, regardless of Ven-

ezuela's intent to withdraw from the OAS, and continue calls for the Government of Venezuela to hold free and fair elections and release all political prisoners in a timely manner;

(3) recognizes the strong leadership of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro in building a coalition of OAS Member States in support of democracy and human rights for the Venezuelan people; and

(4) encourages the President of the United States to prioritize a resolution to the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and an effective response to the growing regional refugee crisis that is emanating from Venezuela, through multilateral cooperation with partners at the OAS and United Nations, and through targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for the deterioration of democratic institutions and the rule of law in Venezuela.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection. C

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize Congressman DESANTIS for his work on this resolution.

The world has watched as Venezuela's economy has nearly collapsed, bringing about a humanitarian crisis on top of the existing political crisis that we see there. Maduro's decision to sideline the democratically elected National Assembly by forming a so-called constituent assembly made up of his lieutenants has cemented Venezuela as a full-fledged dictatorship.

The administration made clear through a combination of sanctions and regional engagement that Maduro's violation of Venezuela's constitution continues to destabilize not just Venezuela, but it is destabilizing this entire region. And the sanctions also made clear that the Maduro regime's corruption and involvement in drug trafficking is known and will not be tolerated.

Venezuela's once prosperous economy is isolated and is suffering record-high inflation rates. The humanitarian crisis, fueled by shortages of food and shortages of medicine, has resulted in the resurgence of diseases and a big increase in infant mortality. All of this has led to even more unrest, fueling the potential of another major migration crisis right here in the Western Hemisphere.

The destabilizing effect of the Maduro regime must end. The resumption of talks this week between the opposition and the Maduro regime cannot

be just another way for the regime to buy time. The international community, regional leaders, and this body must be united in our insistence that Maduro take seriously the need for resolution of this serious political and humanitarian crisis.

Passage of this measure will send a strong, bipartisan message that Congress stands with the Venezuelan people and that Congress stands in favor of democracy and transparency and against corruption and against human rights violations.

This resolution calls on regional leaders and the Organization of American States to continue to pressure Maduro to release political prisoners, to dissolve the unconstitutional constituent assembly, and, most importantly, to schedule fair and transparent elections now.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

Let me start by thanking the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ED ROYCE of California, for his leadership and for moving a second measure forward today on the crisis in Venezuela.

I also thank Mr. DESANTIS for authorizing this resolution, which expresses deep concern about the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

I again thank ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, the gentlewoman from Florida, who is really our leader when it comes to things in the Western Hemisphere.

Let me just say that, when the Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro, chose to move forward with a sham constituent assembly election in July, as far as I am concerned, he took the final step in making his country a full-blown dictatorship. The majority of Venezuelans stayed clear of polling stations and chose not to participate in what was yet another effort from that government to distract from the country's real problem, which, as we have been saying, is a humanitarian crisis created by President Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chavez, an increasingly dangerous human rights climate.

Just last week, the Venezuelan human rights group, Foro Penal, joined Human Rights Watch in releasing a report documenting abuses in the country that have taken place over the past year. I would like to mention a few statistics from this report that shows you just how repressive the Venezuelan Government has become.

Fifty-four hundred people have been detained in relation to antigovernment protests in early April; 3,900 of them are still subject to arbitrary criminal prosecutions and measures that limit their freedoms. And 757 civilians were prosecuted by military courts in violation of both Venezuelan and international law. Even more alarmingly,

124 Venezuelans were killed and 2,000 injured this year while taking part in antigovernment protests.

The Human Rights Watch report states:

In 53 cases involving at least 232 people, detainees were subjected to physical and psychological abuse, with the apparent purpose of either punishing them or forcing them to incriminate themselves or others. In some of these cases, the abuses suffered by the detainees clearly constituted torture. These include electric shocks, severe beatings, being hung in stress positions, sleep deprivation, asphyxiation, and sexual abuse, including, in some cases, rape.

In an August report, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed a similar sentiment pointing to "the existence of a policy to repress political dissent and instill fear in the population to curb demonstrations."

I think it is important to point out that, year after year, Democrats and Republicans have come to the House floor to call attention to the erosion of democracy in Venezuela. As my colleagues have said, Venezuela should be the leader in South America, the most prosperous country in South America, with huge oil reserves. Instead, it is a basket case because of Maduro and because of Chavez.

For many years, it seemed that the United States was an outlier in raising our voices, while many in the hemisphere remained silent. Fortunately, that has changed. Leaders throughout the Americas have been increasingly willing to stand with the people of Venezuela.

It is hard to find a silver lining for Venezuela in such a dark time, but I do hope, from the strong resolve of our friends in Latin America and around the world in rejecting Venezuela's sham constituent assembly and calling out human rights abuses in the country, they will realize that we care about them, that we know what is going on, and that we are not going to let their repressive government sweep things under the rug.

In November, the European Union put in place a wide range of sanctions on Venezuela, including an arms embargo, visa bans, and asset freezes. Our friends in Canada imposed sanctions on human rights violators in the Maduro government, and, on October 26, Canadian Foreign Minister Freeland hosted the Lima Group of Foreign Ministers in Toronto to seek a hemispheric solution to the crisis in Venezuela.

The OAS, the Organization of American States, has also played a critical role in increasing pressure on the Maduro regime, particularly under the leadership of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro.

But we cannot rely on the OAS alone. The United Nations, both with the Security Council and through the Office of the Secretary-General, must do much more to bring attention to Venezuela on the world stage and hold its leaders accountable.

And today, the House of Representatives, here in Washington, goes on

record again underscoring our commitment to the people of Venezuela and condemning the destructive policies of the Maduro regime. With this measure, we are saying enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank Mr. DESANTIS for authoring this resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and author of this measure.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE for moving this through our committee, and I am glad that we are getting a lot of support for this resolution on the House floor today.

President Trump, when he spoke at the U.N. in September, said that "the problem with Venezuela is not that socialism has been poorly implemented, but that it has been faithfully implemented." I think the results speak for themselves. You have a country that is in chaos, that is a basket case, and you have an autocrat doing whatever he can to cling to power.

Think about what is going on in Venezuela:

You have the country with perhaps the largest oil reserves in the world, and yet they have massive fuel shortages;

You have hyperinflation that is over 2,000 percent;

Diseases that we thought had been eradicated, like malaria, are now coming back;

There are massive food shortages such that wide swaths of the population are losing 10 or 15 pounds a year;

And, of course, the Government of Venezuela is very likely to have to default on their debt.

Maduro and his socialist junta are dominating the country. They are oppressing a great many, many people. And, of course, he is aided in this effort by his patron and adviser, Raul Castro, and the Cuban dictatorship. We cannot forget their role in this because they are really central to a lot of what is going on there.

We have been speaking about some of the things Cuba did to our diplomats. That has not been fully resolved to my satisfaction.

So Cuba's role in this is really nefarious. You really have the worst elements of Latin America on display in Venezuela.

I think what this resolution does is it says that this Congress stands foursquare behind the people of Venezuela and their rights and their desires to live in a successful, free, and democratic country; and we do call on the President to continue some of the actions he has taken, some aggressive actions in sanctioning key individuals. We want the Trump administration to clearly be on the side of the people of Venezuela and to make clear that Maduro's failed socialist regime simply cannot continue in this way.

So, please, pass the resolution. What we have done today is just one step,

but I hope the U.S. can do more to aid the people of Venezuela. They are fighting against some tall odds and a lot of power coming down on them, but we have got to do something.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to support this resolution.

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me say that we have spent a lot of time talking about Venezuela on the House floor today. I think that is a good thing. I think it is good that people know what is happening in Venezuela, and I think it is good to know that the tyrants in Venezuela know that we know what is happening in Venezuela.

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The eyes of the world are watching Venezuela and its government. President Maduro must make a real commitment to free and fair elections and release all political prisoners.

In particular, I would like to note the detention of American citizen Joshua Holt and to urge his immediate release on humanitarian grounds.

I think it is important for us to raise these issues on the House floor, so I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 259.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the chairman emeritus of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and one of this body's preeminent experts on the Western Hemisphere.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank our wonderful chairman for yielding me time. I also thank our ranking member, ELIOT ENGEL for his hard work. This committee is a model for other committees in the U.S. House of Representatives. We truly work in a bipartisan manner and it is because of the leadership of Mr. ROYCE and Mr. ENGEL. They set the pace.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill before us, H. Res. 259, by my Florida colleague, Congressman RON DESANTIS, who has been very active in the issue of human rights in our Western Hemisphere. His bill expresses concern and condemnation over the dire political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis that is taking place in Venezuela today. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important resolution. I thank him for his leadership on this issue, on the issue of the lack of freedom and democracy in my native homeland of Cuba, and what he is helping the people of Nicaragua achieve in having separation of powers.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a real problem throughout the hemisphere, and by approving this important measure, which is bipartisan, today, this body will once again demonstrate that we stand in solidarity with the people of Venezuela and their fight for justice, freedom, and democracy.

These are values that we hold so dearly in our country. We take it for

granted that we live in this great country where we can express our thoughts in this wonderful republic, but in so many places in our very own hemisphere, Mr. Speaker, they don't have that luxury.

Venezuelans have been deprived of these key values of justice, freedom, and democracy for far too long, first at the grip of Hugo Chavez, a failed socialist leader, and now with his handpicked successor, another failure of a man and a leader, Nicolas Maduro.

The Maduro regime has hijacked all democratic institutions in Venezuela. It has run the economy so far into the ground that there is hardly any food or medicine or even basic necessities. Inflation is at an all-time high and people cannot afford their daily life.

The economic situation is in turmoil. It is heading towards an even deeper downward spiral because this regime of Nicolas Maduro is corrupt and is incompetent and they only care about filling their own coffers and staying in power, no matter what. All the while, the people of Venezuela continue to suffer.

But this does not seem to trouble Maduro. It does not seem to trouble his cronies. They are enriching themselves on the suffering of the people of Venezuela. From this illicit activity, like drug trafficking and corruption, they are filling their coffers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, they are even using this humanitarian crisis that they have created to defraud organizations that are looking to bring much-needed food into the country.

This resolution in front of us, Mr. Speaker, is bipartisan and strong. It calls on the administration to support the people of Venezuela, to continue to impose targeted sanctions on those responsible for the destruction of democratic institutions in Venezuela.

This resolution also urges important bodies, like the Organization of American States—and we will have soon a new U.S. Ambassador to that esteemed institution—to support the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. It demands a noncorrupt electoral council, as well as calling for the release of all political prisoners.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. DESANTIS for authoring this resolution. I urge my colleagues to offer their strong support and to join us in sending a unified message to Maduro that his actions will not be allowed to continue without a strong U.S. response.

What is that response, Mr. Speaker?

I call on the administration to use more targeted sanctions. We have sent to the administration a very long list of names. So have Senators RUBIO and MENENDEZ. Mr. SRES, Mr. ROYCE, and Mr. ENGEL have joined me.

There are many more people, thugs and cronies of Maduro, who are enriching themselves with the suffering of the Venezuelan people. They want to come to the U.S. We should not extend that courtesy to them. There are consequences to these acts. We will continue to pressure the Maduro regime until democratic order is restored in Venezuela and this grave humanitarian crisis is resolved once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROYCE for the time. I thank Mr. ENGEL; my friend, Mr. Acevedo; and Eric Jacobstein on the Democratic side for their help with this resolution. I most especially thank the author of this resolution, our great Congressman, RON DESANTIS.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me again thank Congressman DESANTIS, Mr. ENGEL, and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN for their work on this resolution.

I think it is a heartbreaking situation what is going on in Venezuela today. It is rather astounding that Venezuela sits on the world's largest proven oil reserves, yet here we have a situation where its citizens lack medicine and food at this time.

I think the recent report that 20 percent of the country's medical professionals have fled Venezuela amid the Maduro regime's self-inflicted political, economic, and humanitarian crisis is indicative of the problem. Inflation right now is reaching 720 percent.

Support of this resolution will send a strong unified message that Congress stands with the Venezuelan people, that we call on regional leaders and the entire international community to hold Maduro accountable for this crisis and to release political prisoners and, importantly, to hold elections immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore urge my colleagues to join me in support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, we have before us two pieces of legislation regarding the ongoing humanitarian and political crisis that is occurring in the country of Venezuela, which has been reduced to poverty and near starvation due to the repressive regime of Nicolas Maduro and that of his dictatorial predecessor Hugo Chavez.

I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. DESANTIS, for introducing H. Res. 259, of which I am an original cosponsor, and to applaud Mr. ENGEL for highlighting the public corruption and threat to democracy in Venezuela via his H.R. 2658, the Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act.

I also would like to single out the lead Republican cosponsor of that legislation, the gentlewoman from Florida and my friend and colleague, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her work over the years in calling attention to the deplorable human rights situation not only in Venezuela, but also in Cuba, Nicaragua, China and so many countries the world over.

As ILEANA understands so well, it is the ideology of the Left—be it hard core Communism, or the Socialism of Hugo Chavez and

now that of his understudy in oppression, Nicolas Maduro—which has brought suffering to so many people.

The people of Venezuela deserve far better.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 259, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 38, CONCEALED CARRY RECIPROCITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-440) on the resolution (H. Res. 645) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 38) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a means by which nonresidents of a State whose residents may carry concealed firearms may also do so in the State, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GRIFFITH (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of family considerations.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 371. An act to make technical changes and other improvements to the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on November 30, 2017, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills:

H.R. 2810. To authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4374. To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to authorize additional emergency uses for medical products to reduce deaths and severity of injuries caused by agents of war, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 24 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 6, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3291. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Claims Procedure for Plans Providing Disability Benefits; 90-Day Delay of Applicability Date (RIN: 1210-AB39) received November 29, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3292. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — 18-Month Extension of Transition Period and Delay of Applicability Dates; Best Interest Contract Exemption (PTE 2016-01); Class Exemption for Principal Transactions in Certain Assets Between Investment Advice Fiduciaries and Employee Benefit Plans and IRAs (PTE 2016-02); Prohibited Transaction Exemption 84-24 for Certain Transactions Involving Insurance Agents and Brokers, Pension Consultants, Insurance Companies, and Investment Company Principal Underwriters (PTE 84-24) [Application Number: D-11712; D-11713; D-11850] (ZRIN: 1210-ZA27) received November 29, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3293. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training, Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Senior Community Service Employment Program; Performance Accountability [Docket No.: ETA-2017-0005] (RIN: 1205-AB79) received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3294. A letter from the Acting Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, DEA, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of FDA-Approved Products of Oral Solutions Containing Dronabinol [(–)-delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (delta-9-THC)] in Schedule II [Docket No.: DEA-344] received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3295. A letter from the Chief, International Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Section 43.62 Reporting Requirements for U.S. Providers of International Services [IB Docket No.: 17-55] 2016 Biennial Review of Telecommunications Regulations [IB Docket No.: 16-131] received November 29, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3296. A letter from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of Health and

Human Services, transmitting a notification of a discontinuation of service in acting role and a notification of designation of acting officer, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3297. A letter from the Senior Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's interim rule — Department of the Treasury Acquisition Regulations; Tax Check Requirements received November 28, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3298. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Safe Harbor for Deteriorating Concrete Foundations Caused by the Mineral Pyrrhotite (Rev. Proc. 2017-60) received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3299. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — 2018 Cost-of-Living Adjustments to the Internal Revenue Code Tax Tables and Other Items (Rev. Proc. 2017-58) received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3300. A letter from the Chief, Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Emergency Import Restrictions Imposed on Archaeological and Ethnological Materials from Libya [CBP Dec. 17-19] (RIN: 1515-AE34) received December 1, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 2897. A bill to authorize the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Director of the National Park Service to enter into cooperative management agreements for the operation, maintenance, and management of units of the National Park System in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-436, Pt. 2). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GOODLATTE: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 4477. A bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System; with an amendment (Rept. 115-437). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 3979. A bill to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize the volunteer services, community partnership, and refuge education programs of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-438). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GOWDY: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 1132. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a 2-year prohibition on employment in a

career civil service position for any former political appointee, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-439). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 645. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 38) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a means by which nonresidents of a State whose residents may carry concealed firearms may also do so in the State (Rept. 115-440). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. ROYCE of California (for himself and Mr. HULTGREN):

H.R. 4546. A bill to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to specify when a nationally traded security is exempt from State regulation of security offerings; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas (for himself and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut):

H.R. 4547. A bill to amend titles II, VIII, and XVI of the Social Security Act to improve and strengthen the representative payment program; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SCOTT of Virginia (for himself, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. SCHKOWSKY, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NAPOLITANO, Mr. POCAN, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. LANDEVIN, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. SANCHEZ, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. NORTON, Mr. KHANNA, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER):

H.R. 4548. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to strengthen protections for employees to exercise their rights to organize and collectively bargain for improved wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment, to sanction violations of such rights and assure meaningful remedies, to establish a process by which employers and employees conclude initial collective bargaining agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. POE of Texas (for himself and Mr. KEATING):

H.R. 4549. A bill to require annual reports on religious intolerance in Saudi Arabian educational materials, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas (for himself and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia):

H.R. 4550. A bill to amend the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to exclude law firms and licensed attorneys who are engaged in activities related to legal proceedings from the definition of a debt collector, to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to prevent the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection from exercising supervisory or enforcement authority with respect to attorneys when undertaking certain actions related to legal proceedings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself and Mr. CARSON of Indiana):

H.R. 4551. A bill to amend the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 to prohibit any individual who served as the head of any element of the intelligence community from acting as the agent of a foreign principal, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GALLAGHER (for himself, Mr. KIND, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. POCAN, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. GROTHMAN, Ms. MOORE, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, and Mr. ROSS):

H.R. 4552. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish rules for payment for graduate medical education (GME) costs for hospitals that establish a new medical residency training program after hosting resident rotators for short durations; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GARRETT (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. KATKO, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana):

H.R. 4553. A bill to require a review of the authorization, funding, management, and operation of the National Targeting Center and the Terrorist Screening Center, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROSKAM (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois):

H.R. 4554. A bill to establish a smart card pilot program to combat fraud, waste, and abuse and to protect beneficiary identity under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RUTHERFORD (for himself, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. MCCAUL, and Mr. KATKO):

H.R. 4555. A bill to authorize the participation in overseas interagency counterterrorism task forces of personnel of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Ms. SHEA-PORTER:

H.R. 4556. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish dental care in the same manner as any other medical service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. WAGNER:

H.R. 4557. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to provide disaster assistance to States and units of general government under a community development block grant disaster recovery

program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. ROYCE of California:

H.R. 4546.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 4547.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution, to "provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States."

By Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:

H.R. 4548.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. POE of Texas:

H.R. 4549.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18.

By Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas:

H.R. 4550.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, which gives Congress the power to regulate commerce among the several states and to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution this power.

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas:

H.R. 4551.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Constitutional Authority—Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. I, Sec. 8, Clause 18)

THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, SECTION 8: POWERS OF CONGRESS

CLAUSE 18

The Congress shall have power . . . To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

By Mr. GALLAGHER:

H.R. 4552.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I of the Constitution grants Congress the authority to regulate interstate commerce.

By Mr. GARRETT:

H.R. 4553.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ROSKAM:

H.R. 4554.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

(a) Article I, Section 1, to exercise the legislative powers vested in Congress as granted in the Constitution; and

(a) Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, which gives Congress the authority “To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof”.

[Page H5524]

By Mr. RUTHERFORD:

H.R. 4555.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. SHEA-PORTER:

H.R. 4556.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8.

By Mrs. WAGNER:

H.R. 4557.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 212: Mr. MAST.
 H.R. 233: Ms. BARRAGÁN.
 H.R. 466: Mr. SERRANO.
 H.R. 502: Ms. CLARKE of New York.
 H.R. 592: Mr. PASCRELL.
 H.R. 632: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. BERA, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. FASO.
 H.R. 635: Mr. PASCRELL.
 H.R. 644: Mr. KING of Iowa.
 H.R. 747: Mr. RUIZ.
 H.R. 754: Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. CORREA, and Mr. LAMBORN.
 H.R. 807: Mr. LAHOOD.
 H.R. 848: Mr. ADERHOLT.
 H.R. 930: Mr. BUCSHON.
 H.R. 1148: Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, and Mr. BYRNE.
 H.R. 1212: Mr. O'ROURKE.
 H.R. 1243: Mrs. TORRES.
 H.R. 1251: Mr. RASKIN and Mr. WELCH.
 H.R. 1298: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.
 H.R. 1300: Ms. JAYAPAL and Mr. POCAN.
 H.R. 1406: Mr. POSEY, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. ABRAHAM, and Mr. RENACCI.
 H.R. 1456: Ms. MOORE, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. BRAT, and Mr. PAYNE.
 H.R. 1472: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
 H.R. 1478: Mr. HECK.
 H.R. 1494: Mr. ABRAHAM and Mr. DOGGETT.

H.R. 1691: Mr. CALVERT.
 H.R. 1825: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.
 H.R. 1953: Mr. LONG.
 H.R. 1957: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
 H.R. 1972: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. DONOVAN, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. VALADAO, and Mr. WALDEN.
 H.R. 1987: Mr. HOYER and Mr. POCAN.
 H.R. 2023: Mr. WESTERMAN.
 H.R. 2077: Mr. FOSTER and Mr. LAHOOD.
 H.R. 2106: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. MEEHAN, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. YODER.
 H.R. 2221: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
 H.R. 2285: Mr. BUCSHON.
 H.R. 2308: Mr. WALZ.
 H.R. 2315: Mr. MOULTON.
 H.R. 2319: Mr. LONG and Mr. PERRY.
 H.R. 2345: Mr. ALLEN, Mr. MOULTON, and Mr. BABIN.
 H.R. 2417: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
 H.R. 2431: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.
 H.R. 2472: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. TIPTON.
 H.R. 2616: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. HECK, and Mr. KIND.
 H.R. 2644: Mr. BACON and Mr. DEFAZIO.
 H.R. 2747: Mr. SERRANO.
 H.R. 2790: Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. VARGAS, and Mr. DOGGETT.
 H.R. 2796: Mr. WEBER of Texas.
 H.R. 2896: Ms. LOFGREN and Ms. NORTON.
 H.R. 2899: Mr. CLAY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, and Ms. KAPTUR.
 H.R. 2902: Mr. RUSH and Mr. DEUTCH.
 H.R. 2953: Mr. HECK.
 H.R. 3034: Mr. CRAMER and Mr. POLIQUIN.
 H.R. 3132: Ms. JACKSON LEE.
 H.R. 3222: Mr. LEVIN.
 H.R. 3330: Mr. COFFMAN.
 H.R. 3350: Mr. COLLINS of New York.
 H.R. 3545: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 3547: Mr. FARENTHOLD and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
 H.R. 3605: Mr. COFFMAN.
 H.R. 3641: Mr. RUTHERFORD.
 H.R. 3671: Miss RICE of New York.
 H.R. 3730: Mrs. BLACK and Mrs. BLACKBURN.
 H.R. 3767: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
 H.R. 3768: Mr. YARMUTH.
 H.R. 3780: Mr. PAULSEN.
 H.R. 3798: Mr. COFFMAN.
 H.R. 3806: Mr. EVANS.
 H.R. 3842: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. ELLISON, and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
 H.R. 3867: Mr. BUCSHON.
 H.R. 3913: Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mr. JOYCE of Ohio.
 H.R. 4207: Mr. UPTON.
 H.R. 4222: Mr. MOULTON.
 H.R. 4223: Mr. COHEN.
 H.R. 4238: Mr. SESSIONS.
 H.R. 4239: Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 4256: Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. HARPER, Mr. KATKO, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. LONG.

H.R. 4265: Mr. VISCLOSKEY.

H.R. 4274: Mr. ROKITA and Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 4300: Mrs. TORRES, Ms. TITUS, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Mr. SERRANO.
 H.R. 4306: Ms. DELAURO.

H.R. 4328: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas and Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 4392: Mr. WELCH, Mr. GALLEGU, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. POCAN, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. PEARCE, Ms. MENG, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 4396: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 4419: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 4429: Mr. HUIZENGA and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 4444: Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. SANCHEZ, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. MENG, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.

H.R. 4445: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 4458: Mrs. HANDEL.

H.R. 4460: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.

H.R. 4494: Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. KILMER, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. BUDD, and Mr. WALDEN.

H.R. 4501: Mr. MOULTON.

H.R. 4505: Mr. CICILLINE and Mr. EVANS.

H.R. 4513: Mr. EVANS and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.

H.R. 4521: Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 4541: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. VELA, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. SOTO, Mr. COOPER, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.

H. Con. Res. 90: Ms. BONAMICI.

H. Con. Res. 95: Mr. COLE.

H. Res. 31: Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H. Res. 87: Ms. LEE.

H. Res. 189: Mr. SHERMAN.

H. Res. 261: Mr. BOST.

H. Res. 310: Mr. RUIZ.

H. Res. 349: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H. Res. 576: Mr. CUELLAR.



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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we praise You for Your goodness; Your faithful love endures forever. You are the protector of Your people.

Today, recapture the minds of our lawmakers and galvanize their wills. May they live blameless lives, doing what is right and speaking the truth from sincere hearts. Lord, infuse them with the spirit of humility so that they will seek to be guided by Your wisdom. May they keep their priorities straight, remembering that You are the only constituent they absolutely must please. Help them to make it their primary goal to please You in what they think, say, and accomplish.

We praise You and pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The assistant Democratic leader.

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

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

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we are facing a deadline of March 5, 2018. It

was a deadline created by President Trump on September 5. That was the day he announced, through the Attorney General, that he was ending the DACA Program.

The DACA Program was created by President Obama to give young people who were brought to this country as infants and toddlers and young children and who grew up in America and are currently undocumented a chance to earn their way to legalization and citizenship. That was the original Dream Act. When President Obama passed his Executive order, he protected them from deportation until Congress responded with a law. I asked for that designation and was thankful President Obama did it.

As a result of his Executive order, 780,000 young people came forward, paid a filing fee of over \$500, went through an extensive criminal background check, and were cleared to be given temporary protection from deportation and temporary opportunities to work in America, renewable every 2 years.

President Trump came into office and ended it. He challenged Congress and said: Now pass a law to take care of this issue. It is a legitimate challenge for the President to issue. I wish he had done it differently, but it is certainly worthy of him to call on us to do our job.

Well, here we are 3 months after that challenge from President Trump and what has the Republican majority done in the Senate or the House to respond to that challenge? Absolutely nothing—nothing, not one thing—to provide these 780,000, as well as others who are eligible for this protection, an opportunity under law, not one thing.

Is it because we have been overwhelmed with business? Well, I defy those who have followed the business of the U.S. Senate over the course of the last year to say that. It is seldom that we have ever come to the floor and debated anything of substance. Most of the time we are an empty Chamber

lurching from one cloture vote to another cloture vote, to a motion to proceed to this nomination and that nomination. The exceptions, of course, were on healthcare and the Trump tax reform bill, and those were done by reconciliation; in other words, strictly partisan efforts.

So we have not done much this year. We certainly haven't done much since September 5 of this year, and now what we hear from the other side of the aisle, from the senior Senator from Texas is, What is the hurry? We have plenty of time here. We will take care of these young people perhaps in January, perhaps in February. The deadline is March 5.

It is pretty easy for any Member of the U.S. Senate to say: What is the hurry, let's go slow, until they sit down and talk to the young people who are affected. I have done that many times, and I did it over this weekend.

I went to Benito Juarez High School in the city of Chicago. A group of about 20 young people came forward, all of them protected by DACA. These young people started telling their stories of being brought to the United States at the age of 1 or 2, watching as some of their relatives have been deported, trying to grow up in America, uncertain of their future—really uncertain today as to what they are going to be doing—and many of them are extraordinarily talented young people. It is not uncommon for them to break down in tears as they tell their story.

One was a 24-year-old graduate of college who received no Federal assistance because she is one of the Dreamers and undocumented. She finished college. She is now teaching in the Chicago Public School System. If she loses DACA protection, she loses her job as a teacher. There are tens of thousands just like her across America.

The senior Senator from Texas asks: What is the hurry? Why do we need to address this issue?

I wish that Senator could have been there and watched her and spoken to

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



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her, as I did, and realized she is living in fear, in terror; that her life as she knows it could end tomorrow—and it could—because of the decision by President Trump to end this protection.

All we have asked for—and many of us on a bipartisan basis—is to call up the Dream Act for a vote in the U.S. Senate, to give these young people a chance of the protection of law so they can continue in this country.

Some Republicans have said we need to sit down and talk about border security. I said I would be happy to do that. When I was part of the Gang of 8, we came up with comprehensive immigration reform, and we had an extensive border security plan. Some of the Republican Senators who offered it told me later: We went overboard and you accepted it. We did. We are serious about border security. That is not an issue, but for the senior Senator from Texas, that is not good enough.

I handed him a sheet of paper last week, and I have a copy of it right here, showing him the proposals we are making on border security. I pointed out to him that 12 of the proposals I handed to him were proposals from his own bill for border security. We are serious about this. This is a genuine effort to give border security provisions the enactment of law along with the Dream Act.

So what we hear is that the senior Senator from Texas came to the floor and said: Well, they are just not negotiating in good faith. Well, I have handed him this provision, this proposal. It was a good-faith gesture and a good-faith effort to move us forward, and the only response we had yesterday from the senior Senator from Texas is: What is the hurry? Why should we get it done this year? Why don't we wait until next year?

Well, next year, as we know, means waiting 2 months when it comes to this issue, and that, to me, is the real fear I have—that we will put this off. The uncertainty, the worry, the stress for these young people will continue while we do nothing—nothing.

We don't enact laws here. We do nothing. We give speeches to an empty Chamber and say: Gosh, I wish we had a little more time here to really do some substantive work. We have all the time we need.

I would commend to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, for goodness' sake, when 76 percent of the American people agree with the Dream Act, when 61 percent of Trump voters agree with the Dream Act, there is no excuse. We need to make it the law of the land.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS DESIGNATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was 20 years ago when I was first elected to the Senate. I was asked to consider a bill called the Red Rocks Wilderness Act. I didn't know anything about it. It was a bill that had been offered by Sen-

ator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. He was retiring. I was asked to consider sponsoring this wilderness proposal in the State of Utah. Of course, I said, I am from Illinois, not Utah, and I have never seen this. Well, they asked me to come out and take a look, and I did.

My wife and I went out to take a look at what was known as the Red Rocks Wilderness Area. It is in the southeastern corner of Utah. I had never been there, nor had I ever heard of it before I visited. What an eye-opener, to go there and see this magnificent vista, this incredible landscape that was being proposed for wilderness protection and status.

So over the years, I have reintroduced the bill, the conversation continued, and it wasn't until President Obama took a major share of this area, which is in San Juan County in the southeastern corner of Utah, and designated it in the name of the Bears Ears Monument that we finally achieved protection for this beautiful piece of real estate.

I have been there. It is breathtaking. There are incredible cultural sites there by Native Americans, and it is a great place to visit, to hike, and to enjoy a special piece of America. It is filled with magnificent red rock formations, deep, carved canyons, long mesas, and rock arches. Some of the photos just don't do it justice. We can take a look at some of these, and we can get an idea of the vastness of the area that is affected here.

Then you might take a look at some of the others and realize it includes a lot of cultural and prehistoric settings that were utilized by the Native American people when they called these caves their homes. It has special meaning to the Native American Tribes that are there. Many of them trace their origins to the very people who dwelled in these caves and the structures they built with the loose rocks that we can still see today.

We look at it and think, Well, if you didn't use this, if you didn't preserve it, if you didn't protect it, what would you do with it?

I have spoken with some of the Senators from Utah, and they have readily conceded there is no oil or gas there to be drilled. There may be some uranium processing but very little. I asked them: Why wouldn't you want this area protected? It doesn't have economic value other than the fact that people will come, tourists will come to Utah to see this beautiful place.

I was troubled when President Trump announced he was going to follow Secretary Zinke's recommendation and shrink the proposed Bears Ears Monument as well as another nearby called the Grand Staircase-Escalante. They would reduce the size of the Bears Ears Monument by 85 percent and Grand Staircase-Escalante by 50 percent.

In April, President Trump issued an Executive order requiring the Department of the Interior to preview and review the previous national monument

designations of President Obama. Although Bears Ears and Grand Staircase are the first two targets to be hit by President Trump, this attack on what is known as the Antiquities Act and our national monuments goes far beyond these two sites.

As part of the review, the President and Secretary of the Interior Zinke considered changing every national monument that had been created since 1996, which is more than 50 nationwide. These are areas that have been protected by Presidents of both political parties. It goes back, in fact, to a Republican President, Teddy Roosevelt, who realized it was worth fighting off some of the parochial and economic interests to preserve pieces of America for future generations.

The list that was subject to the Trump order spans the country. It includes the Cascade-Siskiyou in Oregon, Gold Butte in Nevada, Katahdin Woods and Waters in Maine, Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande in New Mexico, and several marine monuments.

The administration's decisions to shrink Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante goes against continued support for these sites. The Bears Ears Monument was the first monument to be proposed and advocated by the five sovereign Tribal nations: The Hopi, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute, Pueblo of Zuni, and Ute Indians.

The Tribes sought protection because of the important place Bears Ears has in their cultures. The artifacts within Bears Ears range from 700 to 12,000 years old, providing Tribes with an incredible insight into the sacred history of their ancestral homeland and bolstering their deep spiritual connection to the landscape itself. In total, 30 Native-American Tribes with ancestral, historical, and contemporary ties to the Bears Ears region supported the designation—30.

I might recall, for those who are not students of history—and I am learning—treatment of Native Americans in this region has again raised some serious questions about America's past. It wasn't until 1920 that Native Americans were recognized as citizens of the United States in many of these areas. It wasn't until 1957 that Native Americans were given the right to vote in the State of Utah even though Native Americans had served our country in World War II, such as the Code Talkers, who were honored by President Trump last week. It wasn't until the 1970s that the State of Utah built its first public school on a Tribal area reservation—and only did that after being ordered by the Federal court. The history of our relationship with these Native-American Tribes is one that raises questions about our respect for what they meant to the earliest founding of America and what they mean to us today.

Mr. President, I see the majority leader has taken the floor. I know that under the rules he has priority when it

comes to speaking. I wish to finish my remarks, but if I can have the permission of the Chair by unanimous consent and allow the majority leader to speak and then resume my statement after he is finished.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I thank my friend from Illinois.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF KIRSTJEN NIELSEN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate voted to advance the nomination of Kirstjen Nielsen to be Secretary of Homeland Security. Now it is time for us to vote to confirm her so she can get to work for the American people. By confirming Ms. Nielsen's nomination to lead the DHS, this Senate will take a serious step toward strengthening our Nation's security.

Ms. Nielsen will be charged with leading the Department at a critical time. With her understanding of the challenges facing our Nation and her experience in prevention and preparedness, I believe she will excel as the next Secretary of Homeland Security. Her leadership will also help in providing continued assistance to the men and women still suffering from the effects of the recent natural disasters in our country. Our Nation faces a myriad of threats, and I look forward to working with Ms. Nielsen to address each of them.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as we all know, we must pass legislation to fund the government before the end of the week. By approving a short-term bill, we can continue the crucial functions of the Federal Government while we work with our colleagues in the House and the Trump administration to finalize a long-term plan.

The temporary funding measure will come before the House soon, and I expect the Senate to consider it shortly thereafter. It is a clean bill, free from any sort of objectionable policy riders. In addition, it includes a provision to assure States of the future of the Children's Health Insurance Program while a bipartisan reauthorization agreement is completed. All Members should be able to support this noncontroversial, short-term legislation.

We will continue working to pass a funding agreement that advances a number of American priorities—something we will be discussing with the President on Thursday, along with Democratic leaders of the House and Senate.

Yesterday, the Senate Democratic leader expressed his opposition to a government shutdown. I certainly agree with him. So I hope he and his fellow Democrats will continue to work with us in good faith to pass this short-term funding bill and maintain the critical functions of the Federal Government.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, one final matter. Last night, our colleagues in the House voted to send the tax reform legislation to a conference committee. There, Members from both Chambers will work to resolve the differences in our bills and eventually enable us to send a final product to the President for his signature.

The House's action last night is more progress in our years-long effort to deliver real relief to the men and women we represent. I am grateful to our friends in the House for their willingness to continue working with us to help shift our economy into high gear. I look forward to the Senate voting to join the conference later this week.

In the end, both Chambers will have an opportunity to pass the final legislation to help families keep more of their hard-earned money, to create good jobs, and to jump-start economic growth. I look forward to working with all of our colleagues to get this done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS DESIGNATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, resuming my earlier remarks, the Native-American Tribes almost unanimously opposed the action that was announced yesterday by President Trump and Secretary Zinke to shrink the Bears Ears Monument. They have passed resolutions in support of that monument.

Navajo Nation's president said that the President's efforts to shrink the monument "demonstrates their failure to listen to the concerns of our people who have lobbied and fought for over 80 years for this designation." Even worse, the Navajo Nation made several requests to meet with President Trump on the issue, to no avail. Those requests fell on deaf ears, and the administration never met with the leadership of the Navajo Nation or any of the other Tribes who worked to protect this area.

The administration took these actions under the guise of protecting this area for future generations. During President Trump's speech in Utah, he said:

I don't think it is controversial, actually. I think it's so sensible.

From the folks he was speaking to, it must have seemed that his comment was correct, but the group the President was speaking to was a closed-door group of selected supporters of his ad-

ministration who do not reflect the feelings of local residents when it comes to the future of this monument. It reflected the same closed-door process this administration had used to shrink these monuments.

The administration ignored that more than 2.8 million Americans weighed in when there was an open public comment period at the Department of the Interior. Ninety-eight percent of them asked the President to protect the monuments and to maintain their borders—98 percent. So to say that shrinking these monuments dramatically is not controversial is to ignore 2.8 million Americans and the Tribes with whom the President never took the time to meet.

With these reductions, it is clear that Secretary Zinke and President Trump are choosing politics over science and choosing economic and political local concerns over the reality of what this particular monument means to the future of America. They are ignoring Utah's State Historic Preservation Office and the Interior Department's own staff, both confirming that there are artifacts throughout Bears Ears that will now lose their protection because of the decision by President Trump yesterday. The administration's proposed cuts closely follow the desires of Utah politicians to shrink the monument.

I had the opportunity to meet with Secretary Zinke and some of my colleagues a few weeks ago to discuss this reduction in the size of the monuments. In that meeting, he assured me that any potential cuts to Bears Ears would continue to protect the actual site's antiquities, including archeological sites, but according to the internal documents from the Department of the Interior, there are more than 8,400 archeological sites in the monument, 70 percent of which are prehistoric. Even more interesting, according to the Department of the Interior staff, less than 10 percent of the monument has truly been surveyed. That means we have only scratched the surface of the antiquities that could be present there.

What value is it to the people of Utah, what value is it to San Juan County, UT, what value is it to the United States to allow spectators and tourists to roam over these areas without acknowledging their sacred status and historic importance? We only get one chance to preserve our history, and now the President is walking away from that chance for the largest part of the Bears Ears Monument. Taking away protections from these precious places is something that could lead to permanent damage.

During the time that I visited Bears Ears, I stopped near Fry Canyon for a little lunch. I hiked around and saw some amazing artifacts, which I showed in the earlier photograph. These amazing artifacts are outside the new boundaries President Trump decided to draw yesterday. These impressive artifacts are worth preserving, but

President Trump and Secretary Zinke don't agree. They have left Fry Canyon unprotected.

I went to some of the areas where, centuries ago, Native Americans drew artwork on the sides of these canyons, in the walls. It is still very visible, and it should be protected. Some of it has been desecrated and obliterated by graffiti. How can we possibly justify that? How can we say to future generations: We just didn't care enough to keep this intact so that you and your children and grandchildren could appreciate it.

I know there are many more areas like Fry Canyon throughout the original Bears Ears Monument that are no longer protected because President Trump and Secretary Zinke decided to draw new boundary lines.

While I was visiting in Moab, UT, in one of the tourist shops there, I heard a group of about 12 speaking on the other side of the shop, and I drew a little closer just to hear what they might be saying. They were speaking in French. They had traveled all the way from Europe to see this unique area, so critically important to them, so unimportant to this administration. These tourists' willingness to travel halfway around the world tells us that we have something special here. I really wish the President could have met with them and so many others who create a bustling tourist economy in this area, people who come halfway around the world to see it. They believe it is something worth seeing. We should believe it is something worth preserving.

The residents of Moab, just outside the monument, must recognize this. Once a mining town with a dubious future, Moab saw its economy decline as the industry left during the 1980s. But the town has experienced a new rebirth, an economic growth of tourism that now provides up to 40 percent of the jobs in the area.

Last year, National Geographic named Moab, UT, one of the best outdoor towns in the world. Ely, MN, is the other U.S. town to receive that honor. The people of Moab will tell you that the protection of public lands has been good for their economy, creating good-paying jobs, new hotels, and new opportunities, and that they support the Bears Ears Monument. But President Trump didn't pay attention to them, and neither did Secretary Zinke.

According to the Department of the Interior, the number of visitors to Utah increased 20 percent between 2011 and 2015 and is projected to continue increasing. But that didn't impress the Secretary of the Interior when it came to literally obliterating 80 percent of the original Bears Ears Monument that President Obama designated.

It was the University of Utah that found that tourists spent more than \$8 billion in their State in 2015, resulting in more than \$1 billion in State and local tax revenue and more than 142,000 jobs.

When the State is benefiting so much from tourism, why would they give

away the protection of an area that attracts so many people and creates so many businesses and jobs in their own State? With public lands providing such a boon for tourism and economic growth, it is hard to believe that the Utah congressional delegation has ignored this and pushed so hard to destroy these monuments.

The dispute has roots in debate over federally controlled land and Utah's Enabling Act, which was signed more than 100 years ago. When it became a State, Utahns passed a bill to "agree and declare that they forever disclaimed all right and title to the unappropriated public lands . . . and to all lands lying within said limits owned or held by any Indian or Indian tribes." This provision gave all lands not specifically claimed by the State of Utah to the Federal Government. Utah signed up for that. That is how they became a State.

As a result, Utah now has the second most Federal land of any State, with Federal lands making up about 65 percent of their State, including five national parks and eight national monuments. These lands are a source of pride and economic opportunity for so many people. Yet the politicians of Utah don't appreciate that.

Last year, 15 million people visited national parks and monuments in Utah, hiking, camping, and learning the traditions and history of the Native people in that State. Let me say that again. Fifteen million people from around the world visited public lands in Utah in 2016—an 82 percent increase in visitors over the past decade. This is not only the right thing to do; it is the economically sensible thing to do to protect these monuments and these areas. Despite this growth, there is a push by some of Utah's politicians to force the Federal Government to give up these lands and remove the protections for the cultural and archeological resources they contain.

When I met with Secretary Zinke to discuss his recommendations, he confirmed to me that this decision was not based on protecting some of the most extraordinary natural resources in our Nation but, rather, on protecting political alliances.

Every monument designation has had some opposition. Even Roosevelt faced opposition when he worked to protect many of America's iconic places, but despite the opposition, President Theodore Roosevelt, a Republican, protected the Grand Canyon—a controversial decision in his time—and other special places. Thank goodness he did. Thank goodness he had the vision to look forward to future generations instead of looking backward to political promises and political buddies.

Teddy Roosevelt is remembered for his conservation record, preserving many of the places that make America a great nation, but what this administration is doing is just the opposite of Teddy Roosevelt's courage and vision. Repealing protections for Bears Ears

and Grand Staircase-Escalante will not make America great again. It will give up America's greatness for selfish interest.

I urge President Trump and Secretary Zinke to reconsider their decision that rescinds our national monument protection. It will be challenged in court, and it may take a long time to resolve, but I hope ultimately the courts of this land stand up for the right of a President of either political party to make these designations, as they have so many times before. We owe it to America, but we owe it especially to the Native American Tribes and people who have forever called this land home to preserve the sites that are so sacred to them, and we owe it to those in the scientific community and to future generations.

I am hopeful that future generations will be able to visit Bears Ears—as my wife and I have—and learn about the people and culture that made America long before we arrived. It is worth the respect of this generation and future generations, and it is certainly worth it for us to step forward and to say with vision and with courage that we stand behind preserving these sites.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, even as my Republican friends move to reconcile their two tax bills in a conference committee, their problems are far from over.

At the heart of their bill is a toxically unpopular idea—giant tax breaks on big corporations and the very wealthy, paid for by cutting care and raising taxes on millions of middle-class families. The new Republican Party is the party of tax hikes on the middle class to subsidize corporate welfare. That menacing idea at the core of its bill is a problem that, like Hydra, spouts many heads.

Slashing the State and local deduction remains a massive problem for House Republicans from suburban districts like Virginia, New York, Illinois, Washington, and, of course, California. Multiple analyses have shown that, despite the so-called compromise that allows families to deduct up to \$10,000 in property taxes, the pain inflicted on suburban families will not be much mitigated. States like California and

New York will still experience an exodus of taxpayers, which will drain local resources and impact services. For those House Republicans, voting for the conference report is a poisonous vote, substantively and politically, not to mention that home values will fall in those districts of those House Republicans. If they are voting to decrease home values by 10 or 8 percent for every homeowner in their districts, that is political suicide. Why would they do it? That is what will happen, and the homeowners will start seeing that right away.

Another problem: The last-minute inclusion of a corporate AMT has Republicans and corporate leaders scrambling to figure out if it will have the unintended consequence of functionally eliminating the value of the R&D tax credit. Remember, the corporate AMT was added at the last minute because Republicans needed more revenue to offset a generous rate on passthroughs.

That is what Republicans were working on in the waning hours of last week, not trying to figure out how we could help middle-class families with kids in college, with kids who have serious medical expenses, and not reducing the impact that it would have on our deficit. Oh, no. They were busy figuring out how to make tax cuts for the wealthy even more generous as 70 percent of our passthrough income already flows to the top 1 percent, not the top 20 percent, not the top 10 percent—the top 1 percent. There is 70 percent of passthrough income that goes to the top 1 percent of earners. The Republican tax bill already slashed the rate on passthroughs, but several Republican Senators withheld their votes until that loophole was widened further.

I understand that they wanted to help smaller businesses, but take the time and figure out how to help the small businesses without helping the hedge funds, corporate law firms, the big lobbying firms, and other wealthy individuals. Take the time to figure it out—but no. In the rush to get a crumb for small business owners, they are giving a whole, big, nice chocolate layer cake to the wealthy. It is wrong, very wrong.

The inclusion of the corporate AMT is another reminder that Republicans cannot have it both ways. You cannot cut every conceivable tax on big corporations and the wealthy without blowing up the deficit. If Republicans are forced to go back and look at the corporate AMT, they will have to find revenue elsewhere. Will they slightly lessen another corporate tax break or will they ask working Americans to pay more, which they have done in previous iterations on this bill?

Yesterday, we learned the Republican leadership circulated talking points that questioned the legitimacy of the Joint Committee on Taxation—the nonpartisan, independent scorekeepers of tax legislation. Rather than con-

front the awful truth that their bill will not pay for itself as it, instead, costs about \$1 trillion even with dynamic growth estimates, the Republican leadership asked its Members to shoot the messenger. The JCT, which is widely respected and always accepted by both parties, is, all of a sudden, a pariah in Republican circles because it told the truth—that this bill would not cause the growth they projected, that this bill will increase the deficit far more than the Republicans had hoped.

The Republican leadership tried to discredit the nonpartisan umpire it had long praised and had appointed. What a disgrace. It brings up that what has happened in the last week or two here has been one of the most disgraceful episodes in the history of the Senate—a major bill done behind closed doors, rushed through. Then, adding insult to injury, the truth-tellers—the independent, appointed-by-Republican monitors—were discredited because our Republican colleagues didn't like hearing the answer.

There is still time to avert this awful bill. If my Republican friends vote no on the conference bill, we can do a bipartisan tax reform bill. We can pursue a much better process and get a much better product and go so far as to heal a Senate that has been wounded by partisanship and strife, greatly aggravated by the majority's actions on this tax bill.

ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, instead of rushing a bad tax bill through the conference, the Senate should focus on the bevy of year-end issues confronting us. First and foremost, we must reach a spending bill that would have us meet our commitments to support the military and also urgent priorities here at home, such as combating the opioid crisis, shoring up pension plans, supporting veterans' healthcare, relieving student loan debt, and building rural infrastructure.

In previous budget agreements, Democrats have always strived to achieve parity between our investments in defense and jobs and economic development here at home. It has continually been a sticking point with Republicans as we go through these negotiations. They want to increase the spending for defense, the military, but shortchange important domestic programs such as infrastructure, education, scientific research—measures that create jobs and help the middle class. We Democrats support an increase for our military, but we want to make sure other crucial programs don't get left behind. So we will fight just as hard in this budget agreement to ensure that for each dollar we add for defense, a dollar is added for domestic economic development, 50-50.

We care about our soldiers. They are the greatest. They are risking their lives for us, but we also care about a pensioner who spent his whole life

working in the steel mills, working driving a truck, working building buildings. They religiously put money away every month so they would have something when they retire, and if it is not there—they are important too.

General Mattis came to see me and told me how badly our Defense Department needs help. I agree, but I told him to go back to the White House and tell the White House the domestic side of the ledger needs help as well. Spending on the domestic side of the ledger is lower than it was in 2010, despite increased costs.

We also need to provide funding for Community Health Centers, the Children's Health Insurance Program, relief for millions of Americans still recovering from national disasters, and we must come together on a bipartisan bill to support the Dream Act along with tougher border security measures. So it is a lengthy to-do list. It will require hard work, steady cooperation, and compromise on both sides.

Last night, however, there was a concerning spectacle on the House floor. The freedom caucus held up an unrelated vote on the tax bill—who could figure—because they were unsatisfied with the Republican leadership's plan to keep the government open. If we are going to solve all the problems that confront us before the end of the year, House leaders cannot let the Freedom Caucus—a small band of hard-right reactionary conservatives—run the show. If they cooperate with Democrats, they can accomplish something. To just let the Freedom Caucus dictate is a recipe for chaos.

Once again, negotiations broke off because we were at an impasse on the 50-50 parity for defense and nondefense. That has been very important to Democrats for years. We have settled our budget agreements, our spending policy, omnibus agreements always with 50-50, and we believe it is still important today—parity, parity, parity.

As we continue to negotiate with our Republican counterparts, we hope the Republican leadership can avert more of this unnecessary hostage-taking like we saw on the House floor last night that can only impede a serious, ongoing bipartisan negotiation.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Nielsen nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kirstjen

Nielsen, of Virginia, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

The majority whip.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we know last Friday night, into the wee hours of Saturday morning, this body did something remarkable, something people said would never happen. We actually got some very important work done and passed a very important piece of legislation—the first overhaul of our Nation's Tax Code in over 30 years.

People said it couldn't be done. It is too hard. With Democrats opposing us at every step on the committee and on the floor, people said there were just too many obstacles in our way, and it was impossible to accomplish. People said there were too many special interests down on K Street that would make it impossible for us to figure out this Rubik's Cube of a tax code, there were too many moving pieces in this giant tome of our tax law. People warned us, if we did this, we would take political flak from all sides.

Well, to the cynics and skeptics and doubters, I will say: You were wrong. We did get it done. Families and job creators woke up the next day after the final vote feeling a little bit more confident about our Nation's fiscal future. Now that the bill has passed the Senate, they will be less weighed down by the yoke of government. They can breathe a little sigh of relief knowing we are doing our job. We are doing what we said we would do when they gave us control of the government.

Of course, it took no time for our major victory to be mocked, denigrated, or simply misrepresented. Sometimes the false rumor spreading was done deliberately by our friends on the other side of the aisle, which is ironic because Democrats used to support many aspects of this plan, such as lowering taxes for the middle class and eliminating incentives for corporations to ship jobs overseas. I guess we must conclude that they were happy with the status quo, a slow-growing economy, stagnant wages, jobs being shipped overseas because of our self-destructive Tax Code. I guess we would have to conclude they thought that was a good thing. Well, they know it was not a good thing, but they just couldn't stand the possibility that we were going to be able to make this major accomplishment on behalf of the American people. Because they were so mired down in the politics of the day, they lost sight of the forest for the trees.

We all know it is easier to criticize than to contribute, such as when many on the other side feigned outrage about small tweaks that needed to be made to the bill. It is interesting. Back in 2010, there was an amendment called the Durbin amendment No. 3989 where, during the course of the debate, it was necessary to make some changes in the bill by handwriting those changes in the bill text. No one thought that was an outrage. Everyone understood this

is sometimes what happens when you are making last-minute changes to legislation. Yet our Democratic colleagues acted like this was the first time this had ever been done, and 46 Senate Democrats voted for Senator DURBIN's amendment, which included these handwritten changes in the text.

Don't forget the tax bill was passed last week through regular order. "Regular order" is part of the jargon we use around here, but it means the normal legislative process. Unlike the Affordable Care Act that was written in Majority Leader Harry Reid's office and brought to the Senate floor without going through the Senate Finance Committee. Unlike that process, this tax bill originated in the Senate Finance Committee, was the product of multiyear studies, working groups, white papers, a lot of proposals like the Camp draft, for example, that helped inform our debate.

From the bill that had been introduced by the ranking member, Senator WYDEN, along with Senator Coats, we were able to glean some of the best elements of all of those prior efforts. Using regular order, giving Democrats and Republicans a chance to contribute to the legislation in the Finance Committee and on the Senate floor, we gave Democrats and Republicans a chance to offer amendments and to get votes on those amendments. That is what we mean by regular order, and that is what our friend from Arizona, the senior Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, rightly called for earlier this fall.

There were hearings after hearings. Democrats went to them. Democrats had their opportunities to offer amendments during the committee markup and to offer amendments on the floor. So one simply cannot say, honestly or truthfully, as many Democrats have, that the bill was negotiated in darkness, behind their backs, without their participation. It simply is a false claim, it is not true, and the facts show that.

It is not just our Democratic colleagues who have fueled misperceptions about the tax bill we passed late last Friday night, early Saturday morning. There was a big stir raised with the scoring done by the Joint Committee on Taxation. Some of the critics of the tax bill have latched onto the Joint Taxation report, finding that the bill would increase the economy by 0.8 percent over 10 years, not enough for the cuts to pay for themselves, thus adding to the national deficit. That was the claim.

I take concerns about fiscal responsibility very seriously, but we have to acknowledge that economic modeling is notoriously difficult and can be done in a number of different ways. Each of these models has its strengths and weaknesses, each provides a range of estimates, and none is perfect. We have not yet been given the gift of perfect knowledge of the future. In the case of the Joint Committee on Taxation, the

estimate was that the tax bill would generate enough growth to offset its pricetag from \$1.4 trillion to about \$1 trillion—a net \$400 billion feedback effect. This is pretty interesting listening to our colleagues across the aisle. They make the audacious claim that tax cuts generate no economic growth—none. So when the original Budget Committee budget came out, giving the tax writers \$1.5 trillion of deficit spending on a static basis, they claimed that would result in a \$1.5 trillion deficit. Well, the Joint Committee on Taxation concluded that was not true. In fact, tax cuts can have a stimulative effect on the economy. Incentives can change human behavior, but it is notoriously difficult to estimate with any precision.

In any giant complex system like the American economy, the effect of changes is not easy to predict, but even small changes can produce large, far-reaching benefits. In our case, that means changes in our Tax Code can fuel major economic growth, which ought to be our collective goal.

Why should we have to settle for anemic economic growth? Why should we have to settle for flat wages? Why should we have to settle for jobs being created overseas because our Tax Code incentivizes that rather than incentivizing investment and job creation in the United States?

Well, the fact is, we don't have to settle for that, and we haven't. This tax bill represents our best effort to try to make sure our economy does grow, that wages do go up, and that jobs do come home to the United States because businesses are incentivized to bring that money back home and invest it in jobs and wages back here.

I am optimistic that with the reforms we have enacted, the economy could grow by as much as 3 percent, as the Heritage Foundation and the Tax Foundation have said. The President's Council of Economic Advisers and influential economists agree. I am aware of the old saying that if we were to stretch all the economists in the world end to end, we would never reach a conclusion. They call it the dismal science for a reason. It is not rocket science; it is modeling that tries to predict the future, which is notoriously difficult to do. In fact, you can't do it, but we try to come up with the best guesstimate we can.

I think it is wrong to just look at the Tax Code when you are looking at our economic future. Coupled with the regulatory relief we have seen under the new administration, along with the Congressional Review Act where we repealed back some of the onerous regulations on the economy, and with consumer confidence at a 16-year high, I think we all have the sense that America is coming back as a leading economic engine in the world, and we need to do that because we need to lead the way for the world economy. We need to make sure that the standard of living

in America continues to be something that we can achieve—a better standard of living for our children and grandchildren than the one we ourselves have enjoyed. That is the legacy we have inherited from our parents and grandparents.

Yes, we are in a dangerous world. The former Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, said that in his 50 years in the intelligence community, he had never seen a more diverse array of threats than he did today. We can't ignore that, which means that we have to use some of that prosperity for our common defense. That is another important thing we are going to have to do before the end of this year; that is, to agree on a top-line spending number for national defense spending, because we have been trying to cash the peace dividend, again, when there is no peace or at least peace is threatened in places around the world, whether it is in the South China Sea, Syria, North Korea, or in Europe, with Russia on the march threatening NATO and our European allies. We need a strong economy so the standard of living can go up, wages can increase, and so we can do the things that we know we need to do as a country.

Now, I realize that these positive analyses by groups like the Heritage Foundation, the Tax Foundation, and the President's Council of Economic Advisers don't entirely pacify some of the deficit hawks. I count myself among them. We worry about whether tax reform will add to our debt through cuts in decreased revenue. But even based on conservative estimates, this tax reform could result in \$130 billion in new revenue—revenue we would not otherwise have.

Here is the problem. Here is the elephant in the room that people simply choose to ignore or have given up on: Revenue isn't our biggest problem. It is our spending addiction. It is the 70 percent of Federal spending that is on autopilot, going up on average about 5.5 percent per year. Now, we have tried to do what we could through the Budget Control Act in 2011 and put a cap on discretionary spending, including defense spending. That has been relatively flat since 2011, but all the while, entitlement spending has gone up because we don't have the political courage to deal with it. The deficit can't be eliminated with tax increases. We can't tax America's producers enough to fill the hole. We have to address mandatory spending, which keeps growing year after year after year. It nearly doubled during the Obama administration, during which time our friends across the aisle never really said much about deficits and debt. But it is real. We ought to go to the root cause of it and not claim that it is making tax cuts to help make our economy more vibrant and improve the quality of life for more Americans.

Putting aside the macroeconomic concerns over the tax bill for a moment, it is easy to see how, on a more

personal level, families and workers will benefit. Sometimes in accounts about tax reform, this more human focus is simply left out and that is a mistake.

For example, in our bill, rates are reduced for everybody. Every tax bracket sees a reduction in their tax rate. The standard deduction for families is doubled. So if you are a married couple filing a joint return, for the first \$24,000 you earn, there is zero tax—zero. Then we double the child tax credit. I think that is something we should do because we need to help those families that have children to make sure that their families prosper, and the child tax credit is one way we can do that.

The ObamaCare mandate to buy government-approved insurance, which is just a tax on low- and middle-income Americans, is repealed, and I think that is another form of tax relief. There are 6.7 million Americans who had to pay a penalty to their own government because they couldn't afford to buy the government-mandated insurance because of the way that program was structured. Well, we eliminate that entirely. So, hopefully, those families can then use their own resources to buy insurance policies that meet their needs rather than what the government mandates.

We also soften the blow of the death tax, something I will continue to work to completely eliminate because I think it is simply a moral issue. Why should we tax income when earned and, then, when families want to pass it on to their children—whether it is the family farm, ranch, or a small business—we tax them again and make that sometimes impossible to do? Usually, if you want to reduce something, you tax it and that doesn't apply to the death tax because death will come no matter what. But it is immoral, I believe—double taxation. That is no reason for Washington to prevent families from passing on the fruit of their labor to their loved ones.

The likely result of all of these changes will be that wages will increase by as much as \$4,000 for the average family. That is the estimate of the Council of Economic Advisers. Think about that—if we can get the economy growing faster than the 1.9 percent anemic growth of the Obama years. Just think about that. The economy has grown on average at 3.2 percent since World War II. Yet we are being asked to settle for the new normal of the Obama years when the economy grew at 2 percent or less. So if we can get the economy growing faster, we will see wages improve and we will see family income improve. If we can cut their tax burden and relieve them of onerous things like the poverty tax, known as the Obama individual mandate tax, families will be better off.

A median family of four will see their tax burden cut by \$2,200. Now, I know that in Washington, DC, when we talk about millions and billions and trillions of dollars, \$2,200 doesn't seem like

a lot of money, but for many families struggling to meet their obligations paycheck after paycheck, \$2,200 can make a big difference. It can help them pay off their mortgage or pay college tuition for their children or replace a water heater or get their car fixed or finally take a long-delayed family vacation.

Now, the last heedless claim I have heard about our tax bill is that it mainly benefits corporations at the expense of normal, hard-working men and women. Once again, this is a false claim. Some portion of our high corporate tax rates are always borne by labor—by American workers, in other words. Our friends across the aisle and the critics sometimes claim that if you do something for a business, whether it is a passthrough business or a corporation, it has no effect on the people who work for it. Well, that is just demonstrably wrong, because the better off those businesses are, the more people they can hire, the better the wages are that they can pay, and those help hard-working American families.

So higher business taxes mean fewer jobs and smaller paychecks, and it means that we are less competitive in a global economy. That is why businesses are moving their headquarters overseas to low-tax countries like Ireland or the United Kingdom. This situation will change under our new bill.

In a recent survey of corporate chief executive officers, 82 percent said they would increase capital spending if our bill passed and 76 percent said they would increase hiring. So, yes, it is true that business will benefit, but we want them to because the end result will be less tax dodging and more jobs coming back home and, as I mentioned earlier, apart from businesses, families and individuals benefit too.

What is so bizarre about the debate is that this is a concept that former President Obama championed; that the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, has championed; and that the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN, has championed—lower corporate taxes—because they realize this is a self-inflicted wound because it forces businesses overseas and prevents them from bringing their income back and investing it in the United States in jobs and wages. My question to them is this: Have you forgotten? Well, I don't think they have forgotten.

Throughout the tax reform process, Members of this Republican Conference on this side of the aisle worked together, and I am grateful for the contribution that each and every one of them made. With the strong headwinds from our opponents on the other side of the aisle who wanted failure, presumably because they liked the status quo rather than success, we knew this was going to be difficult, and it was. We got it done, but we are not finished yet.

As we head into a conference with the House of Representatives, the focus has to be on how we can maintain support here in the Senate. I hope our

friends across the Capitol understand that the Senate bill was a very fragile compromise and that one or two—well, two or more—Senators who would not support that bill could jeopardize the House-Senate conference. So we have to be very careful. We have to continue to communicate and work together with each other, and we can't undermine our own victory. It is not just our victory. It is a victory for American families and for our country and for our standing in the world. So when we begin our conversations with the House, let's take care to work closely together and continue to communicate. Let's prove that passing tax reform wasn't just a dream or an aberration. It was real. Now with the ball on the 5-yard line, we just have to punch this into the end zone.

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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DACA

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise today with increasing concern about the uncertain future facing DACA recipients. There are nearly 800,000 DACA recipients. They are children who were brought across the border, through no fault of their own, years and years ago. There are nearly 800,000 across the country and nearly 50,000 just in Arizona alone. They have protections now from deportation, but those protections will run out around the first of March.

Despite the sense of urgency to solve the problem by the end of the year, there is very little legislative progress to show for it. The time has come for us to work together to deliver a real solution. We don't need partisan bills that send a message; we need bipartisan solutions that can pass the Senate.

We have spent so much time operating under reconciliation that it is worth reminding people that this measure will need 60 votes in order to succeed. So much of the legislation we have been considering has been under reconciliation, with just a 51-vote margin being sufficient. That will not be the case with a fix for DACA. We need to get 60 votes. That means if we hope to protect DACA recipients, both sides will need to compromise.

These individuals whom we seek to help are students, employees, colleagues, and friends. They don't know any other home but the United States. They have embraced the values of hard work and perseverance, and, in turn, their communities have embraced them as their own. Some of the most compelling pleas on behalf of these young people have come from those who know them best. These kids are

not just Americans in their own eyes; they are Americans in the eyes of their friends, their classmates, their teachers, and their coworkers.

We all recognize that these kids were brought here, as I mentioned, through no fault of their own. No one wants to see them deported. As leaders of a nation of immigrants, we need to work together and deliver a chance for them to have a bright future. We need workable legislation that can realistically be passed and signed into law. We don't need to make a statement; we need to make a law.

There are many challenges facing us with regard to immigration, but protecting these young people should not be one of those challenges. This should be the easy lift.

I hope we can all work together in a bipartisan way to find a solution for these kids who deserve a solution.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, relief for American families is on the way.

Last week, the Senate passed our version of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, a tax reform bill that will provide immediate, direct relief to hard-working Americans.

Our legislation doubles the standard deduction, it doubles the child tax credit, and it lowers rates. Under our bill, a family of four making \$73,000 a year will see a \$2,200 tax cut, or a reduction in taxes of about 60 percent over what they are paying under current law. A single parent with one child making \$41,000 will see his or her taxes drop from around \$1,865 today to just \$488 under our bill, a reduction of nearly 75 percent over what they are paying today.

That is just the beginning. The tax bill before us today is going to provide immediate relief to hard-working families. It is going to immediately lower their tax bills. It is going to immediately mean more money in their pockets.

But this bill is about much more than that. This bill isn't just about helping Americans today—although it is most certainly going to do that—the bill is about helping Americans for the long term. It is about giving Americans access to the kinds of wages, jobs, and opportunities that will set them up for a secure and prosperous future.

The way we do that is by improving the playing field for American businesses. In order for individual Americans to thrive economically, we need American businesses to thrive. Thriving businesses create jobs, they provide opportunities, and they increase wages and invest in their workers.

But our current Tax Code hasn't been helping businesses thrive. For years now, our tax laws have left businesses of all sizes struggling under the burden of high tax rates and an outdated tax system that has left American businesses at a disadvantage in the global economy.

Small businesses employ nearly half of American workers and create a majority of the new jobs in this country. But right now, small businesses face high tax rates that can make it difficult for these businesses to even survive, much less thrive and expand their operations. Our bill will fix this.

To start with, our bill implements a new deduction for passthrough businesses like partnerships, LLCs, and S corporations. This deduction will allow them to keep more of their money, which will allow them to reinvest in their operations, increase wages, and hire new workers.

Our bill also reforms current provisions in the Tax Code that frequently leave small businesses with very little cash on hand. Under our legislation, small businesses will be able to recover the capital they have invested in things like inventory and machinery much more quickly and, in certain cases, immediately. This, in turn, will free up capital that small businesses can use to expand and to create jobs.

Our legislation also includes provisions that I helped develop that will simplify accounting rules for small businesses, which will also help reduce their tax burden, leaving more of their earnings to reinvest in their businesses and their workers.

In addition to providing relief to small businesses, another thing our bill will do to boost Americans' wages is lower our massive corporate tax rate. Our Nation's corporate tax rate today is the highest in the industrialized world, which puts the United States at a major disadvantage next to our international competitors. Reducing the corporate tax rate will enable American businesses to compete on a more level playing field, which will, in turn, free up money that U.S. businesses can use to create jobs and increase wages.

The White House Council of Economic Advisers estimates that reducing the corporate tax rate to 20 percent, as our bill does, will increase wages for U.S. households by \$4,000 annually. That is money that families can use to save for retirement, help pay for a child's education, replace an aging vehicle, or invest in a new home.

Our bill will also boost wages and increase opportunities for Americans by ending the outdated tax framework that is driving American companies to keep jobs and profits overseas. Our Nation currently operates under a so-called worldwide tax system. That means that American companies pay U.S. taxes on the profits they make here at home, as well as on part of the profits they make abroad once they bring that money back to the United States. The problem with this is that American companies are already paying taxes to foreign governments on the money they make abroad. Then, when they bring that money home, they could end up having to pay taxes again on part of those profits and at the highest tax rate in the industrialized world. It is no surprise that this

discourages businesses from bringing their profits back to the United States to invest in their domestic operations and new jobs and increased wages.

Our bill replaces our outdated worldwide tax system with a territorial tax system. Under our legislation, American companies will no longer face the double taxation that has encouraged them to send their investments and their operations overseas. Instead, U.S. companies will have a strong incentive to invest their profits at home in American jobs and in American workers.

All in all, the Tax Foundation estimates that in addition to increasing wages, our bill will create nearly 1 million new jobs for American workers and boost the size of the economy by 3.7 percent.

I don't need to tell anybody that American families have had a tough time in recent years or that our economy as a whole has stagnated, with weak economic growth, almost non-existent wage growth, and a lack of opportunity that has become the norm for way too many families. But this tax bill marks the beginning of the end of the Obama-era economy.

The tax bill we just passed will usher in a new era of dynamism in this country. It will let Americans keep more of their earnings right now, and it will improve Americans' economic situation for the long term. It will send a message to the world that America is serious about competing and succeeding and winning in the 21st century economy.

Under this bill, American companies will compete and win globally, and American businesses, large and small, and the American people will thrive as a result.

I look forward to going to conference with the House of Representatives and getting a final, comprehensive tax reform bill to the President. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity—literally, a once-in-a-lifetime chance—to make a real difference in the lives of literally millions of Americans. It is time to get this bill across the finish line. It can't happen soon enough for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, President Trump and the Republican leadership, as we just heard, are talking every day on television, at news conferences, telling the American people how this tax bill that was passed here at 2 o'clock in the morning on Saturday—without any hearings, with no serious debate—how this tax bill is designed to help the middle class and how it was written for the middle class.

Unfortunately, I suspect that I will not shock too many Americans by suggesting that what President Trump has been saying is not truthful. This legislation, according to numerous independent studies, will provide 62 percent of the benefits to the top 1 percent—62

percent of the benefits will go to the top 1 percent—while increasing taxes on 83 million middle-class households by the end of the decade. Why? The reason is that the tax cuts for middle-class families expire by the end of 2025, while the tax breaks for large corporations are made permanent.

We are living in a moment in American history where we have an unprecedented level of income and wealth inequality, where the top one-tenth of 1 percent now owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent, where the top 1 percent owns almost twice as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent, and, if you can believe it, where three of the wealthiest people in this country—Mr. Gates, Mr. Bezos, and Mr. Buffett—three people own more wealth than the bottom half of the American population. That is where we are right now.

Yet, in the midst of this incredible level of income and wealth inequality, my Republican colleagues believe that this is a moment when 62 percent of the benefits of so-called tax reform should go to the top 1 percent and 42 percent of the benefits should go to the top one-tenth of 1 percent, while at the same time tens of millions of middle-class families will end up paying more in taxes. How crazy is that? So we have a situation in which the wealthy, who need tax breaks the least, will benefit the most, and the working class and middle class of this country, who need the most help, will benefit the least.

The President of the United States and my Republican colleagues tell the American people that trickle-down economics—giving huge tax breaks to the wealthy and large corporations—will expand the economy. We just heard Senator THUNE talking about that. They will create new jobs and will bring in so much revenue that it will pay for the deficit it creates.

Every independent expert who has taken a look at this tax bill has said it will substantially increase the deficit, even after accounting for the possibility of increased economic growth. The Joint Committee on Taxation has told us that this bill will increase the deficit by \$1.4 trillion over the next decade. Why is that important?

First of all, it shows, if I may say, the hypocrisy of my Republican colleagues who, year after year after year on this floor, lectured us about the dangers of a \$20 trillion national debt and growing deficits. We heard this time and time again. But somehow, when it comes to the need to provide tax breaks to billionaires, that concern about the deficit seems to have disappeared.

Secondly and more immediately, there is no doubt in my mind that if the Republicans are able to pass this bill, which will soon go to a conference committee—this bill that gives huge tax breaks to the top 1 percent and raises the deficit by \$1.4 trillion—there is no doubt in my mind that they will suddenly rediscover their great concern

about deficits and the debt and move directly within the next few months to begin the process of cutting programs desperately needed by the working families of this country—the elderly, the children, the sick, and the poor.

This is not just BERNIE SANDERS speculating. This is what the New York Times said in a front-page article a few days ago:

As the tax cut legislation passed by the Senate early Saturday hurtles toward final approval, Republicans are preparing to use the swelling deficits made worse by the package as a rationale to pursue their long-held vision: undoing the entitlements of the New Deal and Great Society, leaving government leaner and the safety net skimpier for millions of Americans.

Speaker Paul D. Ryan and other Republicans are beginning to express their big dreams publicly, vowing that next year they will move on to changes in Medicare and Social Security. President Trump told a Missouri rally last week, 'We're going to go into welfare reform.'

Let me take this opportunity to translate into English what phrases like "entitlement reform" or "welfare reform" really mean. What they mean in reality are massive cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education, nutrition programs, affordable housing, and other programs desperately needed by a declining middle class. It means that after they pass this so-called tax reform bill, which would provide a \$200,000 tax break to CEOs who make over \$16 million a year, they will come back to the floor of the Senate and fight for cuts to Social Security for senior citizens trying to survive on \$12,000 or \$13,000 a year. So there are massive cuts for millionaires and billionaires in their taxes at the same time as they want to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for struggling seniors.

"Entitlement reform" means that at a time when millions of seniors are splitting their pills in half because they cannot afford the outrageously high cost of prescription drugs, Republicans want massive cuts to Medicare. It means that when two out of every three nursing home residents in this country rely on Medicaid to pay for their long-term care, the Republicans want to make massive cuts to Medicaid.

We do not know exactly what form these cuts will take. I think that is not yet clear. There has been discussion among Republicans about raising the retirement age for Social Security to 70 years of age, forcing older workers to work years more before they can get their earned retirement benefits.

Maybe they will cut back on cost-of-living increases through a so-called Chained CPI—a new formulation that means lower benefits not only for seniors but for millions of disabled veterans. They apparently believe, for those of you on Social Security now, that the COLAs you have been getting in recent years are just too high. That zero percent increase you got a couple years ago? It is much too high; we have

to change the formula and lower benefit increases.

Maybe they will go back to their long-term dream of privatizing Medicare and converting it into a voucher program, which will say to the elderly in this country: Here is a check for \$8,000. You go out and find private insurance on your own. I would say good luck to any elderly person in this country who is struggling with heart disease or cancer. You see what kind of insurance program you are going to get with a check for \$8,000.

I would remind my colleagues that many of these proposals were included in the budget resolution the Republicans voted for right here on the floor of the Senate. This is not speculation; these are issues and items that Republicans already voted for. They already voted for a \$1 trillion cut to Medicaid, which would throw some 15 million Americans off of health insurance. They have already voted in the budget to cut Medicare by \$473 billion. In my view, the last thing we should be doing is giving tax breaks to billionaires while cutting programs for the most vulnerable people in our country.

During the campaign, Donald Trump, as a candidate, promised he would not cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. He made that promise over and over again. I have some charts. Let me quote some of the tweets and some of the things Donald Trump said on the campaign trail.

This is what he said: "I was the first & only potential GOP candidate to state there will be no cuts to Social Security, Medicare & Medicaid."

On another occasion, he said:

I'm not a cutter. I'll probably be the only Republican that doesn't want to cut Social Security.

That was January 24, 2015.

It's my absolute intention to leave Social Security the way it is. Not increase the age and to leave it as is.

That was Donald Trump on March 10, 2016.

Here is another quote:

You know, Paul [Ryan] wants to knock out Social Security, knock it down, way down. He wants to knock Medicare way down. And, frankly—well, two things. Number one, you're going to lose the election if you're going to do that. . . . Now, I want to get rid of waste, fraud, and abuse. I want to do a lot of things to it that are going to make it much better, actually. But I'm not going to cut it, and I'm not going to raise ages, and I'm not going to do all of the things that they want to do. But they want to really cut it, and they want to cut it very substantially, the Republicans, and I'm not going to do that.

Before I go on to the next quote, I want to tell Donald Trump that, as a candidate, man, he was exactly right. This is what he said on March 29, 2016. He said that the Republicans wanted to cut Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid.

Well, Candidate Trump, you were exactly right, because that is now what we will see in a few weeks or a few months.

Another quote from Donald Trump as a candidate:

Social Security faces a problem: 77 million baby boomers set to retire. Now, I know there are some Republicans who would be just fine with allowing these programs to wither and die on the vine. The way they see it, Social Security and Medicare are wasteful 'entitlement programs.' But people who think this way need to rethink their position. It's not unreasonable for people who paid into a system for decades to expect to get their money's worth—that's not an 'entitlement,' that's honoring a deal.

Well, there it is. Candidate Donald Trump said over and over again that he would not cut Social Security, that he would not cut Medicare, that he would not cut Medicaid. In fact, quite correctly, he predicted that the Republicans would try to do exactly that.

Now I would like to talk directly, if I might, to the President of the United States.

Mr. President, on the campaign trail, over and over again, you said that you would not cut Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. Today, I am asking you nothing more than to keep your word. Don't lie to the American people.

Millions of people voted for you because you said you would not cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Keep your word. Tell Senate Leader MCCONNELL and tell House Speaker PAUL RYAN that you will veto any legislation that cuts these programs.

With that, I yield the floor.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the postclosure time on Executive Calendar No. 495 expire at 4 p.m. today, December 5; and 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.

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

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 2:36 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ENZI).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. 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.

SECURE ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to make a few brief remarks regarding the introduction of the Security, Enforcement, and Compassion United in Reform Efforts, and we have selected the acronym SECURE for this piece of legislation we are introducing today. This bill promotes and protects the interests of the American people in a lawful immigration system and provides a fair and equitable solution on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, and everyone in the Senate knows that by the acronym DACA. It is the product of several months of hard work between this Senator and Senators CORNYN, GRAHAM, TILLIS, LANKFORD, PERDUE, and COTTON. I think, before the day is out and the Senate closes down, you will hear from almost all of those folks on their approach to this legislation and their support for it.

Before I discuss what the bill does, I want to explain the process we used to reach this point. On September 5, 2017, Attorney General Sessions announced that President Trump had decided to rescind former President Obama's unlawful Executive amnesty program. Because almost 700,000 young people relied on President Obama's false promise, the Trump administration called upon Congress to do what the President doesn't have the legal authority to do and to find the only real type of long-term solution to this issue. Obviously, we are here because that is a legislative solution and not something the executive branch thinks up and tries to put in place.

Starting in September, I have held multiple meetings with Senators CORNYN, GRAHAM, TILLIS, LANKFORD, PERDUE, and COTTON to determine how best to fix DACA. Our aim was to find a solution that not only is fair for DACA recipients but also promotes the interests of the American people. The immigration policies of the previous administration carried consequences that weren't always in our best interest. For example, President Obama allowed thousands of people to illegally cross our borders and to stay in our country, including dangerous gang members, sex offenders, and violent criminals. So robust border security is crucial to bring integrity back to our Nation's immigration enforcement.

The enforcement policies of the previous administration enabled dangerous, unauthorized criminals, individuals like Kate Steinle's killer, to have free rein in our country, risking the safety of innocent Americans. The

flagrant disregard of so-called sanctuary jurisdictions unfairly takes tax dollars from hard-working Americans, only to ignore the rule of law and their own people's public safety.

In crafting our bill, we also considered the inherent unfairness in our Nation's immigration court and asylum adjudication systems and how hundreds of thousands of aliens wait in backlogs for years at a time. That is wrong. It hurts the people who are stuck in the backlog, and it is unfair to ask the American people and legal immigrants to bear the burden of supporting these people while they wait.

Finally, thanks to the leadership of Senators GRAHAM, PERDUE, and COTTON, we discussed in our small group of Senators the need for a merit-based immigration system, one where we bring people to this country based on what they can contribute and not simply because they have some attenuated family relationship to a legal immigrant who is already here.

So after having these discussions and after meeting with the President to get his input and his support, we have come up with a plan. This plan is fair to all parties. It is pro-American, and it is a solution to DACA.

Our plan, as I said, which goes by an acronym, the SECURE Act of 2017, provides a solution to all of the issues we discussed. First, building off of the hard work and leadership of Senator CORNYN, we are putting days of porous, uncontrolled borders behind us. We are doing this by mandating the construction of tactical and technological infrastructure at the border. We are also beefing up our law enforcement and judicial resources, and we are putting more boots on the ground in the border States so that we can better apprehend and prosecute those who enter our country illegally.

Our plan takes meaningful steps to end the lawlessness and tragedies at the hands of dangerous criminal aliens throughout our country. We do this by cracking down on sanctuary cities, ending the misguided catch-and-release policies of the previous administration, and finally taking real steps to address intentional visa overstays.

In recognition of the many Americans who have lost their lives to criminal aliens, we included Kate's law, named after the person murdered by a criminal felon who came back into our country five times—Kate Steinle. So it is Kate's law. This legislation enhances penalties for repeat illegal border crossers and expands the inaccessibility and expedited removal of terrorists, gang members, aggravated felons, and drunk drivers. We also provide a fix to the disastrous Zadvydas decision so that the government doesn't keep releasing dangerous criminals onto our streets just because of the refusal of their home countries to take responsibility.

Our bill takes steps to eliminate many of the "pull" factors that encourage people to immigrate illegally.

We do this by permanently authorizing the E-Verify Program and providing immunity and other incentives to encourage small businesses to participate in that E-Verify Program. We also take meaningful steps to reduce immigration court and asylum adjudication backlogs by hiring more judges and personnel, limiting the number of continuances an immigrant can receive, and imposing new safeguards to combat well-documented fraud and abuse.

Again, thanks to the leadership and advocacy of Senators GRAHAM, PERDUE, and COTTON, our bill eliminates the phenomenon known as chain migration. From the day this bill becomes law, immigrants will be able to bring only their spouses and minor children into the country. This bipartisan, pro-American worker reform, which the President strongly supports, is an important first step toward creating the merit-based, economically productive immigration system that both Democrats and Republicans want.

Finally and most importantly, we provide a bipartisan solution to protect undocumented young people brought to the United States as children by adopting a bill that goes by the acronym BRIDGE, Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy. Senator DURBIN called the BRIDGE Act "an opportunity for supporters and critics of DACA to come together and address a compelling humanitarian issue on a bipartisan basis."

We agree with Senator DURBIN. The BRIDGE Act is supported by Senators GRAHAM, DURBIN, GILLIBRAND, HELLER, MURKOWSKI, FEINSTEIN, NELSON, FLAKE, SCHUMER, and HARRIS. It would provide relief from deportation and work authorization to DACA recipients, allowing them to continue to fulfill their dreams, and they will continue to contribute to our economy.

As you can see, Mr. President, our plan has fair, bipartisan, and serious provisions. By listening to colleagues and adopting solutions that both sides can agree on, we are providing a real solution to the immigration issues our country is facing. Our plan protects the DACA kids, it cracks down on criminal illegal aliens, and it provides real long-term reforms to our Nation's immigration system that benefit the American people. It does so through the proper legislative process, in other words, by a constitutional way—unlike a previous President tried to do this—providing greater certainty for Americans and immigrants alike.

Importantly, it is also supported by the President. That is all the more reason to pass this bill and fulfill our promises to the American people and the DACA recipients.

Again, I want to thank the hard work of Senators CORNYN, GRAHAM, TILLIS, LANKFORD, PERDUE, and COTTON, and their staffs, especially, in developing the solution. I am looking forward to considering this measure in the new year and seeing President Trump sign it into law, as he asked us to do.

I see that two of my colleagues, Senator LANKFORD and Senator TILLIS, are here. I am giving up the floor, if you would like to speak.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I want to thank Chairman GRASSLEY for his leadership on this issue and for his willingness to sit down and talk to a diverse group of people who think we have a problem that we should solve and that we must solve.

Senator GRASSLEY just did such a good job of describing some of the technical aspects of the SECURE Act and the BRIDGE Act and other legislation that actually came together to create the SECURE Act.

I want to back up and talk a little bit about what we are actually trying to do here. There are two key components to this bill and to efforts that have gone before the point at which we have introduced this bill that I think are very important.

The first one is the DACA Program. That is Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The DACA Program is something that was implemented in 2012 by President Obama. What President Obama sought to do was to provide some certainty for young adults and children who were brought across the border—not through their own decisions but through the decisions of their parents or a guardian to cross the border illegally—and find themselves illegally present in the United States. Today, they are still protected because they are still protected under DACA, but the President announced on September 5 that on March 5 that program would end.

Now, you can imagine that there are hundreds of thousands of young men and women who are uncertain about their future status in this country. It is a problem we need to solve. The other side of the equation is something that is also equally important to me and to a number of people in this body. It has to do with our border security and interior enforcement.

Back in late winter, I spent a week down on the southern border. I went to the Rio Grande Sector and the West Texas Sector. I spoke with a lot of people at the land ports that hundreds of thousands of people cross every day. We listened to their concerns about things we need to do to better secure the border.

There are two debates in Congress right now. I don't actually embrace either of the two extremes. There is the one extreme that says build a big, beautiful wall that is 2,000 miles long. It is impractical and not necessary.

There is the other extreme that says we don't need borders; we need bridges. That is impractical and unsafe.

What we need is a solution to border security so that we know who is in this country and so that we have an orderly way to move between countries for someone who is in our country who

wants to come to work or visit the United States and return back in a legal fashion.

The other thing we have to look at in border security that I think is oftentimes overlooked is the humanitarian crisis with an unsecure border. There is one of the numbers that stuck with me. There were so many that we covered when we were down with border security, but this stuck with me—actually, two numbers. This one is most heart-breaking: Over a 20-year period, 10,000 people have died crossing the border unsuccessfully. Ten thousand bodies have been recovered as a result of crossing the border and not finding their way to a safe place. About 1,000 of them were children. Unless we have the people, technology, and infrastructure on the border to know who is trying to cross, we can't protect them. Even if it means we are going to take them into custody and potentially deport them, at least they will be alive.

Another statistic was very important to me, too. It was in a discussion I had with border security agents down in Laredo, one of the big land ports where people cross every day. I am not going to get into a lot of the details, except to say that they confiscate about 400,000 doses of methamphetamine about every 48 hours in this one land port. That is where they confiscate it. By most estimates, it is only a minor percentage of all of the illegal drugs crossing the border. So we obviously need more people, technology, and infrastructure to be able to capture people who are crossing the border in various trucks and cars. They are finding ways to hide these drugs that are poisoning our Nation's youth and, really, people of all ages.

So there is a reason for border security. There is a reason to invest in people, technology, and infrastructure. There is a reason for us to have a productive discussion about how we can provide a compassionate, sustainable solution to the children and young adults who came to this country through not their decision but the decisions of their adult guardians.

That is what this bill, the SECURE Act, is setting forth. We are trying to get a productive discussion going with Democrats and Republicans who will come together and recognize that a balanced bill provides for border security, provides a sustainable solution for the DACA population, and get it done before March 5.

There are some people that want to, I think, play a little bit of brinkmanship. They have already set in their mind how they want this bill to look. What worries me about a bill where you use timing, maybe a year-end budget agreement, or some other device to get the bill done, is that that doesn't necessarily produce a bipartisan outcome that you can be sure of is always going to be on the books. Those types of bills—those types of quick "gotcha" sort of actions—are oftentimes the bills somebody will try to come back to and repeal or revise.

We want a sustainable solution. We want a solution that is going to work and give certainty to this DACA population for the rest of their lives. I think the provisions of the BRIDGE Act that are now in the SUCCEED Act do that.

I want to thank Senator LANKFORD. Senator LANKFORD and I filed another bill. We are full of acronyms here. I don't know, but sometimes they say we are full of other things, but we are full of acronyms. The SUCCEED Act is another bill, and I think that many of its provisions will be considered as we go through the negotiation process to get a bill to the President's desk. The bill that we sponsored is the called SUCCEED Act. It is the Solution for Undocumented Children through Careers, Employment, Education, and Defending our Nation Act. It is a lot like the BRIDGE Act, in that we go to the DACA population, and we know something about the DACA population that I think is oftentimes overlooked. It is a great group of people. There are a little bit less than 2 million. Many of them are working hard, going to school, and serving in our military. They deserve an opportunity and to be provided a way to be able to recognize they are legally present in this country.

That is what I think we are going to accomplish with this SECURE Act. This is what I hope my Democrat colleagues will do, those who actually endorse the BRIDGE Act. There are many of them. Senator GRASSLEY ran through the list. I will not do it again. Let's sit down and solve this problem. Let's accept that there are people at the far left who are going to stand on one issue at the expense of letting March 5 pass and have the DACA population at risk. Let's also tell the people at the far right who want nothing less than full deportation, that that is not going to happen.

Let the people in the center who want to come up with a sustainable, respectful, compassionate solution that is paired up with solid border security measures and interior enforcement, provide a solution for this population. I think my colleagues who have worked together in the working group that Chairman GRASSLEY has led are committed to working with Democrats to come up with a reasonable solution. I know that I am. I know my colleague, Senator LANKFORD, is.

I hope that everybody will sit down and recognize that, at the end of the day, this is for our Nation's security and the security and the certainty of the DACA population. If we set out about accomplishing those two goals, then I think we will be very successful. Then we can start building on that dialogue for so many other things we need to talk about when it comes to interior enforcement and immigration reform.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I am honored to be here with several other Members to talk about the issue of im-

migration. This has become a very contentious issue. As soon as you say the word "immigration," there is a whole group of people who immediately start screaming amnesty on every part of the conversation. Another whole group starts screaming "jack-hooded thugs" trying to take grandmothers out of their homes, and the whole conversation diminishes, and we lose the policy issues that are in place.

There are obvious problems with immigration. We have not taken those obvious issues on in decades. They need to be resolved, and every year they are not resolved, this issue gets harder and it gets more complicated. We should address the issue of immigration. For years, the conversation has been out there, and for years, it has remained unresolved. I would challenge this body in the next 3 months: Let's resolve some of the big issues in immigration.

Almost 4 years ago, I was in Central America with a group of other Senators and House Members. We were meeting with Central American leaders, and we were meeting with them to talk about immigration and about some of those individuals leaving those countries who were coming to the United States illegally. But also, we met with them in Central America to determine what they should do for immigration. Multiple countries that were there in the conversation were talking about how they were increasing their border requirements at their borders, how they were managing their workforce within their country, and how individuals from other Central American countries were traveling to their countries and changing the job structure and changing the pay structure.

We somehow get this belief that the immigration issue is only an American issue. Every country in the world deals with immigration because every country in the world has the right and the responsibility to know who is in their country. Are they citizens? Are they noncitizens? I should have the ability, in my country, to be able to know who is coming in as a guest and to be able to say yes or no. That is a basic right. For some reason, that becomes lost in all of this conversation.

When we fly anywhere else in the world, we have a visa or we have a passport because when we enter that country, that country requires it. That country, when we land, wants to know who is in their country and where they are. That seems normal to us when we talk about travel, but for some reason, it gets lost in this issue of immigration. This should be a normal conversation—that our country would know who is in the country, that we would know where they are, if they are a guest, and that we would know when they are leaving.

After the 9/11 Commission finished, they challenged our Nation to resolve one of the issues of immigration that sat out there that is still unresolved to this day. It is entry-exit visas. Why can

we not know if a person comes in under a legal visa? We know when they come in, but we don't know when they leave. That is still unresolved a decade and a half later. Year after year, when I talk to Homeland Security, they say: We are doing a pilot project. We are close.

Year after year, that is unresolved. The vast majority of the people who are in our country illegally didn't cross a border illegally. They came with a visa, they overstayed it, and they never left. We are never asking the questions: Who is here, who is not here, and where do those connections come from?

What I would like to find is a way to establish a group of foundational issues that are commonsense solutions to the obvious immigration issues that we face—and find common ground. We will have disagreement in this body, but we should be able to find common ground on immigration issues that we can all look at and say: That is a reasonable way to do it. Probably, every Member of this body would do it a little bit different, and we would have a different set of preferences, but we should all agree it should be done. We have to solve the obvious issues, and there are areas of common ground to be able to do it.

Quite frankly, the President of the United States gave us quite a gift about 3½ months ago when he said to the DACA Program: That is an administrative program. It should be a legislative issue. I am not going to renew that any more as an administrative issue. That needs to be done in Congress.

For the first time in a long time, Congress has a deadline to be able to deal with immigration. That is actually a very good gift because this Congress has punted the immigration issue year after year without a deadline to get it resolved. Now we do have one. That deadline is in early March. I would suggest to this body: Let's get it resolved. Let's find the areas where we can actually find common ground in this area. Some should be pretty obvious.

Immigration courts, right now, have over half a million cases backlogged and pending. Currently, if you are going to hire a new judge to be able to be in the immigration courts, it will take 742 days to hire one immigration judge. That is not right. That is ridiculous. We should be able to get that resolved, to be able to add new judges to our immigration courts, and to be able to help deal with the backlog of over half a million people. The E-Verify system has been renewed in a bipartisan way year after year. Let's take it beyond the temporary program that it is right now. Some people don't know it is a temporary program. Let's move it from a temporary program to a permanent program. Let's do a permanent reauthorization. And let's make the tweaks and changes that are needed, whether it is to be able to move E-Verify into the hiring system, whether

it is to be able to encourage individuals in their hiring—for more companies to be able to use it, for it to be a faster system that is more reliable. At times it can take up to 6 months to get a final answer from E-Verify. Again, that is absurd. That is a fixable issue that we should be able to do.

We should be able to resolve the issue of chain migration. We somehow believe that chain migration is an issue that has existed forever. It has not. It has been around only since 1965. Prior to 1965, our immigration issues were tighter than they are now. But now it has formed into this system where you can have initially your nuclear family, and then as you gain citizenship, you can add parents, and you can eventually add siblings, and you can add other individuals, and it continues to accelerate.

I am always frustrated when I hear people talk about our legal immigration system in the United States and say that we should be more open. We admit 1 million people a year through legal immigration—1 million a year. We are a very open country to legal immigration.

We need to be more precise. We need to base our immigration not just on chains of family connections but actually what our Nation needs to grow economically. I am not anti-family—far from it—but we should have a reasonable system. Canada doesn't do it this way. Australia doesn't do it this way. The UK doesn't do it this way. We still do. We should be able to resolve this.

We should deal with the issue of border security. There has been a lot of conversation about a wall. I don't think we should have a 2,000-mile-long wall on our southern border and a multithousand-mile-long wall on our northern border, but I do think we should be able to monitor our border and know who is coming in and out. Not everyone is coming just to work. There are individuals who are trafficking drugs and people. We do need to be able to monitor them.

I have heard folks say that we don't need a wall anywhere. I totally disagree. This whole adage of a 20-foot wall just begs for a 21-foot ladder—if you talk to the homeland security folks and the border security folks, they would say: Fine, put a 21-foot ladder there because it slows you down in the process. A wall is not designed to prevent you entirely; it is designed to slow you so we can actually interdict you, prevent you from coming in.

Yuma, AZ, can tell us the story about when they put up a wall, how it dramatically slowed down crime in Yuma, AZ, rather than just having an open border. There are areas where we desperately need a wall. There are other areas where we just need vehicular barriers. There are other areas where we need drones, and we need greater technology. But we certainly need more personnel in that area. It is one of the other challenges we face.

The President said: Let's add 5,000 new people. Great. Do you know how long it takes to hire one Border Patrol person? It takes 450 days—450 days to hire one person on the Border Patrol. It is a broken system of hiring. We need to fix that.

We need to do more rapid screening.

We certainly need to take care of the issue of sanctuary cities. All of the Nation last week did a giant sigh for Kate Steinle's family. Kate was murdered in San Francisco—a sanctuary city—by someone who had seven felonies and who had been deported five times. Then a jury said that because the bullet ricocheted off the ground, it wasn't really murder. He can go free. We have to resolve the issue of sanctuary cities. That is unjust. We are better than that as a nation.

We certainly should resolve the issue of DACA. We have kids who have been in this country and have grown up in this country. They get up every day, and they say the Pledge of Allegiance to this country. They speak perfect English. They have great grades and no criminal history. I asked people in my State: Who would you like to come into the country and be free to join this country? If they say the pledge every day, if they speak perfect English, if they are passionate about entrepreneurship and starting companies and getting engaged, if they have joined the military—that is exactly whom the people of my State would like to see immigrate to this country to be a part of it.

Well, guess what. We have almost a million of them already living here, but they have no legal status. They were brought here as a child by their parents under no decision of their own. We should have a long-term legislative solution. This particular bill that is under discussion now has a short-term solution to that, something called the BRIDGE Act. It is a 3-year legislative solution. It cries out for a longer solution, but it at least gives additional certainty more so than what DACA has.

I would challenge this body to look at all of these reasonable solutions and to say: If we can't decide on these, let's start the conversation. What can we decide on? How far can we get? How much can we resolve in immigration?

Let's do it, and let's do it right. Let's start the conversation, but let's finish it this time. We should negotiate with the House. They have some great ideas. We should negotiate here. There are some tremendous ideas on both sides of the aisle. But let's certainly get it done. I look forward to that ongoing conversation. Let's get this resolved in the days ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I know the Senator from Arkansas has some remarks to make, so I will keep mine brief. I want to speak on the introduction of the Security, Enforcement, and

Compassion United in Reform Efforts Act, or the SECURE Act, which we will, under the provisions of rule XIV, put on the Senate calendar following the vote on the nomination at 4 o'clock. This bill is a product of a working group formed by Chairman GRASSLEY of the Senate Judiciary Committee—the committee with jurisdiction over immigration matters. I have been a part of that, as have Senators Graham, Tillis, Lankford, Perdue, and Cotton.

I would say to our friend from Illinois, we are all united in the desire to actually come up with a solution to this problem.

Our working group had two assignments. The first was to adopt reforms to secure America's borders and enforce our immigration laws. The second was to find a compassionate solution for those individuals who received deferred action under the DACA Program created by President Obama in 2012.

When I introduced a border security bill—the Building America's Trust Act—in August, I made clear that the main purpose for that was to create solutions that we could put in place to deal with our porous borders and that throwing money at the problem is not the answer, but it was also contemplating that at some point in the not too distant future, we would need to combine border security and enforcement measures with a solution for the recipients of the deferred action under President Obama, which now President Trump has appropriately sent back to Congress for us to address.

Coming from the State with the longest border with a foreign country—the State of Texas—I can tell my colleagues that my understanding and appreciation for border security are multifaceted. It requires boots on the ground, it requires technology, and it requires improvements in aging infrastructure at our ports of entry. But it also requires new authorities and enhancements to existing immigration laws to close loopholes that incentivize people who repeatedly violate our laws.

We can all agree that we need to protect America's international borders, whether they be to the north or south. Each day that we fail to put the needed resources and laws in place for border security and interior enforcement, we strengthen the resolve of drug cartels, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations to encroach on our sovereignty with impunity.

If we are going to act to help folks who were brought here by their parents, for whom we all have compassion—and thanks to President Obama's insistence on going around Congress in violation of the law, they now find themselves in limbo—prioritizing the resources needed to secure the border is the first step. It is not the last step, it is the first step. If we can demonstrate our ability to deal with a compassionate solution for the DACA recipients and combine that with real border security and interior enforce-

ment, I would propose that we don't need to stop there, but we do need to regain the public's confidence that we are capable of dealing with these issues in a responsible way.

The DACA Program was designed to help those who were brought here illegally, but it was not created lawfully. President Trump, as I said, did the right thing when he kicked it back to Congress. So we have now introduced a bill that will address the very issues that our friends across the aisle say they care about the most: a solution for the DACA recipients. This bill provides a framework for a legislative proposal that we can support and that will regain America's trust.

I have told both Senator SCHUMER, the Democratic leader, and my friend Senator DURBIN from Illinois that I stand ready to work with them on a proposal that includes the four pillars of the GOP framework: border security, interior enforcement, improvements to the E-Verify system, and some limits on chain migration. I hope they will come back to the table and respond to this proposal. I hope they will also quit threatening to shut down the government, which won't solve the problem but, indeed, will make it worse.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I want to associate myself with much of what my Republican colleagues have said about the immigration bill we are working on—or perhaps I should say, to be more accurate, the immigration bill we should be working on, because the Democrats at this point simply will not take yes for an answer. We are offering a package that they should support, and in return, they are threatening to shut down the government.

So let me just dispense off the top with their argument, such as it is, about the so-called DACA recipients.

No one is eager to deport 690,000 illegal immigrants who are here mostly through no fault of their own. They were left in legal limbo by President Obama, and everyone wants to find a good, durable, long-term solution.

But if we are going to give legal status to these illegal immigrants in their twenties and their thirties, we have to recognize that there are going to be negative side effects.

First, we are going to encourage parents from around the world who live in poverty and oppression and war to illegally immigrate to our country with small children. What could be more dangerous and even immoral than that?

Second, we are going to create a whole new category of Americans who could get legal status for their extended family, to include the very parents who brought them here in violation of our laws. We often hear that children ought not pay for the crimes of their parents. That may be so, but surely parents can pay for the crimes of the parents. They are the ones who created the situation in the first place.

I offered legislation with Senator PERDUE earlier this year called the RAISE Act. It had many features in it to replace unskilled and low-skilled immigration with high-skilled immigration, to limit chain migration, to reform our refugee program, and to eliminate our diversity lottery. This Congress needs to take up our legislation and pass it. But today I want to focus on chain migration in particular because chain migration is one of the biggest categories of immigration that bring unskilled and low-skilled workers to this country to compete for jobs and drive down the wages of working Americans.

Did you know that once you have legal status in this country, once you have a green card and become a citizen, you can bring to this country not only your spouse and your unmarried minor children but your adult children and their spouses and their children and your adult brother and your adult sister and your parents and their siblings—and it goes on and on and on. That is why it is called chain migration.

Our legislation would put a halt to chain migration. It is a kind of downpayment on long-lasting legal immigration reform, in addition to things like strengthening E-Verify, improving security at our border, and Kate's Law, named in honor of Kate Steinle, as we heard Chairman GRASSLEY outline earlier today.

We are also pairing those provisions with a bill that Democrats and Republicans should support, the BRIDGE Act. The idea of this bill is simple enough—that everyone who has a DACA card gets 3-year provisional status. That gives them certainty without giving them permanent residency or citizenship, which I think sounds pretty reasonable. I know the Democrats agree with me, too, because earlier this year they were calling for passage of the BRIDGE Act. The BRIDGE Act is supported by Members of both parties, as Chairman GRASSLEY outlined, including many prominent Democratic Senators—both Senators from California, the senior Senator from Florida, the junior Senator from New York, even the minor leader and the minority whip. In fact, the minority whip called the BRIDGE Act a bipartisan breakthrough.

If the Democrats were to oppose our legislation today, the SECURE Act, the question would be, Why? Well, I think I know what they might say. They might say: Oh, those terrible Republicans have added a bunch of terrible Republican ideas to this bill. Let me just ask, which of these provisions are so terrible? That we secure our border? Countries have borders, and those borders have to be secure. Is it terrible that we stop unscrupulous employers from hiring illegal immigrants by strengthening E-Verify? When people say that E-Verify doesn't work, what they mean is—E-Verify works. What they mean is that they want employers

to be able to hire illegal immigrants, to take jobs away from Americans and pay them submarket wages.

What about discouraging illegal and highly dangerous border crossings?

To get back to chain migration, do we really want a system in which green cards are given out by random chance? Because that is what we have not just in the diversity lottery but through chain migration. Today, you can get a green card in this country simply because someone in your extended family happened to immigrate to this country 20 or 30 or 40 years ago, irrespective of your ability to stand on your own two feet in our economy, to get a job and pay taxes and not take welfare, to assimilate into our culture.

Shouldn't we have an immigration system that focuses on the needs of America's workers and the American economy, not one that gives out green cards by random chance the way we have today? Shouldn't we be focused on the jobs and the wages of American citizens? After all, they are who elected us to come here to represent their interests.

I don't think this is unreasonable, and, frankly, I don't think the Democrats do either. They have supported the BRIDGE Act. They have supported reform of other immigration programs—temporary visas—because they worry about the impact of immigration on lower wage, blue-collar workers.

Now, the Republicans have stepped up and done exactly what the Democrats have said they wanted: We have offered a real, long-term solution for persons who have received a DACA work permit. All we are asking for in exchange are commonsense reforms to prevent another situation, like the one happening now, in the future. So it is time for Democrats and Republicans to come together and support this bill.

If you are serious about helping these DACA permit recipients, you should vote for this bill now. It is good for those DACA recipients, it is good for American workers, it is good for our communities, and it will be a good first step toward lasting pro-American, pro-worker immigration reform.

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

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

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Nielsen nomination?

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

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

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 62, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 305 Leg.]

YEAS—62

Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Reed
Capito	Heitkamp	Risch
Carper	Heller	Roberts
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rounds
Cochran	Inhofe	Rubio
Collins	Isakson	Sasse
Coons	Johnson	Scott
Corker	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Tester
Cruz	Manchin	Thune
Daines	McCain	Tillis
Donnelly	McCaskill	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Warner
Ernst	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Young
Flake	Nelson	

NAYS—37

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hassan	Schatz
Booker	Heinrich	Schumer
Brown	Hirono	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaine	Stabenow
Cardin	Klobuchar	Udall
Casey	Leahy	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Markey	Warren
Duckworth	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Murphy	
Franken	Murray	

NOT VOTING—1

Alexander

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Alabama.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STRANGE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

Mr. STRANGE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 455.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Emily Webster Murphy, of Missouri, to be Administrator of General Services.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; 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 nomination 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 Murphy nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 501.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Glen R. Smith, of Iowa, to be a Member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration, for a term expiring May 21, 2022.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; 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 nomination 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 Smith nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to executive session for consideration of Calendar No. 321, the nomination of Joseph Balash to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior. I further ask that there be 1 hour of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; and that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate; and 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.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, next week, the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, will consider a proposed rule, that, if approved, will end net neutrality as we know it and will threaten the foundation of a free and open internet. Net neutrality is the simple proposition that internet service providers should treat all internet traffic the same; they should not be able to exploit their power to charge for preferred treatment, allowing big corporations to dominate the internet.

The Chairman of the FCC, Ajit Pai, wants the FCC to undo its protections for net neutrality. His proposed ruling is perversely styled as "Restoring Internet Freedom," when in fact it would do the opposite. It would allow internet service providers to decide which websites will be privileged and which will be throttled or even blocked. Make no mistake: This will mean that the big firms that can afford the "fast lane" will be protected, while harming consumers, startups, and potentially even freedom of speech online.

Alarming, Chairman Pai has decided to ignore millions of comments submitted by individuals across the country, citing concerns that they are not "unique." As a Member of Congress accountable to my constituents, this is a particularly offensive posture. Unique or not, comments and concerns submitted to my office by Vermonters

are treated with the same weight and value as any other. Until the FCC fully and meaningfully considers the more than 21.7 million comments it has received about this proposed rule, it should not proceed with this vote.

A recent New York Times article by Farhad Manjoo, entitled, "The Internet Is Dying. Repealing Net Neutrality Hastens That Death," lays out clearly why the FCC's proposed repeal of net neutrality will bring the open internet one giant leap closer to becoming a corporate playground. If, as expected, Chairman Pai jams through his proposed rule change next week, it will be clear that he has done so to the benefit of a few deep-pocketed corporations and to the detriment of everyone else who relies on the internet to support commerce, communication, and community. I ask unanimous consent that the article by Mr. Manjoo be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the New York Times, Nov. 29, 2017]

THE INTERNET IS DYING, REPEALING NET NEUTRALITY HASTENS THAT DEATH

(By Farhad Manjoo)

Sure, technically, the internet still works. Pull up Facebook on your phone and you will still see your second cousin's baby pictures. But that isn't really the internet. It's not the open, anyone-can-build-it network of the 1990s and early 2000s, the product of technologies created over decades through government funding and academic research, the network that helped undo Microsoft's stranglehold on the tech business and gave us upstarts like Amazon, Google, Facebook and Netflix.

Nope, that freewheeling internet has been dying a slow death—and a vote next month by the Federal Communications Commission to undo net neutrality would be the final pillow in its face.

Net neutrality is intended to prevent companies that provide internet service from offering preferential treatment to certain content over their lines. The rules prevent, for instance, AT&T from charging a fee to companies that want to stream high-definition videos to people.

Because net neutrality shelters start-ups—which can't easily pay for fast-line access—from internet giants that can pay, the rules are just about the last bulwark against the complete corporate takeover of much of online life. When the rules go, the internet will still work, but it will look like and feel like something else altogether—a network in which business development deals, rather than innovation, determine what you experience, a network that feels much more like cable TV than the technological Wild West that gave you Napster and Netflix.

If this sounds alarmist, consider that the state of digital competition is already pretty sorry. As I've argued regularly, much of the tech industry is at risk of getting swallowed by giants. Today's internet is lousy with gatekeepers, tollbooths and monopolists.

The five most valuable American companies—Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google and Microsoft—control much of the online infrastructure, from app stores to operating systems to cloud storage to nearly all of the online ad business. A handful of broadband companies—AT&T, Charter, Comcast and Verizon, many of which are also aiming to become content companies, because why

not—provide virtually all the internet connections to American homes and smartphones.

Together these giants have carved the internet into a historically profitable system of fiefs. They have turned a network whose very promise was endless innovation into one stuck in mud, where every start-up is at the tender mercy of some of the largest corporations on the planet.

Many companies feel this shift. In a letter to Ajit Pai, the F.C.C. chairman, who drafted the net neutrality repeal order, more than 200 start-ups argued this week that the order "would put small and medium-sized businesses at a disadvantage and prevent innovative new ones from even getting off the ground." This, they said, was "the opposite of the open market, with a few powerful cable and phone companies picking winners and losers instead of consumers."

This was not the way the internet was supposed to go. At its deepest technical level, the Internet was designed to avoid the central points of control that now command it. The technical scheme arose from an even deeper philosophy. The designers of the internet understood that communications networks gain new powers through their end nodes—that is, through the new devices and services that plug into the network, rather than the computers that manage traffic on the network. This is known as the "end-to-end" principle of network design, and it basically explains why the internet led to so many more innovations than the centralized networks that came before it, such as the old telephone network.

The internet's singular power, in its early gold-rush days, was its flexibility. People could imagine a dazzling array of new uses for the network, and as quick as that, they could build and deploy them—a site that sold you books, a site that cataloged the world's information, an application that let you "borrow" other people's music, a social network that could connect you to anyone.

You didn't need permission for any of this stuff; some of these innovations ruined traditional industries, some fundamentally altered society, and many were legally dubious. But the internet meant you could just put it up, and if it worked, the rest of the world would quickly adopt it.

But if flexibility was the early internet's promise, it was soon imperiled. In 2003, Tim Wu, a law professor now at Columbia Law School (he's also a contributor to *The New York Times*), saw signs of impending corporate control over the growing internet. Broadband companies that were investing great sums to roll out faster and faster internet service to Americans were becoming wary of running an anything-goes network.

Some of the new uses of the internet threatened their bottom line. People were using online services as an alternative to paying for cable TV or long-distance phone service. They were connecting devices like Wi-Fi routers, which allowed them to share their connections with multiple devices. At the time, there were persistent reports of broadband companies seeking to block or otherwise frustrate these new services; in a few years, some broadband providers would begin blocking new services outright.

To Mr. Wu, the broadband monopolies looked like a threat to the end-to-end idea that had powered the internet. In a legal journal, he outlined an idea for regulation to preserve the internet's equal-opportunity design—and hence was born "net neutrality."

Though it has been through a barrage of legal challenges and resurrections, some form of net neutrality has been the governing regime on the internet since 2005. The new F.C.C. order would undo the idea completely; companies would be allowed to block

or demand payment for certain traffic as they liked, as long as they disclosed the arrangements.

At the moment, broadband companies are promising not to act unfairly, and they argue that undoing the rules would give them further incentive to invest in their broadband capacity, ultimately improving the internet.

Brian Hart, an F.C.C. spokesman, said broadband companies would still be covered by antitrust laws and other rules meant to prevent anticompetitive behavior. He noted that Mr. Pai's proposals would simply return the network to an earlier, pre-network-neutrality regulatory era.

"The internet flourished under this framework before, and it will again," he said.

Broadband companies are taking a similar line. When I pointed out to a Comcast spokeswoman that the company's promises were only voluntary—that nothing will prevent Comcast from one day creating special tiers of internet service with bundled content, much like the way it now sells cable TV she suggested I was jumping the gun.

After all, people have been predicting the end of the internet for years. In 2003, Michael Copps, a Democratically appointed commissioner on the F.C.C. who was alarmed by the central choke points then taking command of the internet, argued that "we could be witnessing the beginning of the end of the internet as we know it."

It's been a recurrent theme among worriers ever since. In 2014, the last time it looked like net neutrality would get gutted, Nilay Patel, editor of the Verge, declared the internet dead (he used another word for "dead"). And he did it again this year, anticipating Mr. Pai's proposal.

But look, you might say: Despite the hand-wringing, the internet has kept on trucking. Start-ups are still getting funded and going public. Crazy new things still sometimes get invented and defy all expectations; Bitcoin, which is as Wild West as they come, just hit \$10,000 on some exchanges.

Well, O.K. But a vibrant network doesn't die all at once. It takes time and neglect; it grows weaker by the day, but imperceptibly, so that one day we are living in a digital world controlled by giants and we come to regard the whole thing as normal.

It's not normal. It wasn't always this way. The internet doesn't have to be a corporate playground. That's just the path we've chosen.

HONDURAS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to alert all Senators to the situation in Honduras. Those of us who care about Central America have watched the election for Honduras's next President with increasing alarm. It has been more than a week since November 26, when the people of Honduras cast their votes. Since then, repeated delays and suspicious behavior, which suggests either incompetence or fraud, by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, TSE, that has been tallying the ballots, have incited large public demonstrations.

Late last week, the government of President Juan Orlando Hernandez suspended constitutional rights and imposed a 10-day, 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew. Several protesters, including a 19-year-old girl, have reportedly been shot and killed by Honduran troops, and hundreds more have been arrested. Salvador Nasralla, the main opposition

candidate, called for a new election and reportedly urged the Honduran police and military to disobey orders of their commanders to fire on demonstrators.

Even before the Honduran people went to the polls, the prospects for a free, fair, and peaceful election faced many challenges. The most obvious point of contention is that President Hernandez is seeking a second term, since until recently the Honduran Constitution had been interpreted to strictly limit Presidents to a single 4-year term.

Ironically, in 2009 former President Manuel Zelaya was forced from power by a coalition of military officers, businessowners, and conservative politicians, including Hernandez, after they accused Zelaya of using a popular referendum on a proposed constitutional convention to extend his own rule.

Zelaya's ouster was initially labeled a coup by the U.S. State Department, but it was not long before the United States accepted the result and resumed sending economic and military aid to the government of President Porfirio Lobo. During the next 3 years, the influx of illicit drugs and the incidence of violence, including assassinations of journalists and other civil society leaders, increased dramatically, and Honduras became among the most violent countries in the world.

After Hernandez became president of the National Congress, he and his National Party replaced the Supreme Court with justices intended to support their political agenda. In 2013, Hernandez was declared President of Honduras after an election fraught with reports of vote buying and threats and assassinations of political opponents.

Two years later, the same Supreme Court ruled that he could run for a second term, paving the way for last week's election. Just 8 years after former President Zelaya was pushed out for allegedly proposing that the Honduran people vote on the question of a second term, President Hernandez had consolidated his control by replacing the justices of the Supreme Court, appointing the TSE, maintaining a majority in the Congress, and using the state media to drown out his critics. It was widely predicted that he would coast to victory.

President Hernandez's government, in addition to becoming increasingly autocratic, has been dogged by accusations of pervasive corruption.

For these reasons and because of the opaque and bizarre conduct of the TSE during the vote tallying process, it is perhaps not surprising that the situation has deteriorated to the point of becoming a national crisis of confidence in the integrity of Honduras's democracy.

Contrary to past practice, the TSE did not issue early results until the day after the polls closed. At that time, it announced that, with 57 percent of the vote counted, Mr. Nasralla, a former TV sports journalist, was leading by 5

percentage points. This indicated the possibility of an historic upset, and while based on past practice the final count was expected the next day, the process of tallying the votes dragged on behind closed doors with no further announcements.

While Nasralla and his supporters celebrated and the third-placed candidate, Luis Zelaya of the Liberal party, conceded, President Hernandez and his allies in the press insisted that he would come out on top once the rural votes were counted.

The TSE also said the rural vote count was delayed, and on Wednesday, after a long silence, the TSE indicated that Nasralla's lead had started to shrink, but the press reported that no technical reason was apparent to explain the delay as the results from all polling stations were reportedly transmitted electronically as soon as the polls closed.

As time dragged on, suspicions of fraud escalated among Nasralla's supporters, and last Wednesday afternoon, the TSE said its computer system had inexplicably ceased functioning for 5 hours. Then on Wednesday night, the TSE reported that President Hernandez was ahead by several thousand votes, which triggered protests by Nasralla's supporters, some of them reportedly throwing rocks and lighting fires in the streets, who were met by troops firing tear gas and live bullets.

According to press reports, the opposition is questioning ballots from 5,300 polling places and has called for a recount of ballots from three rural departments. Yesterday morning, after only a partial recount, the TSE announced its final tally in favor of President Hernandez by just 1.49 percent, a gap of 52,333 votes.

The process has been so lacking in transparency, so fraught with irregularities and inexplicable delays, and coupled with reports of excessive force by the Honduran police and military against peaceful protesters, it is increasingly obvious that the TSE's announcement made a bad situation worse. There is too much suspicion of fraud and too much distrust.

On Saturday, I asked the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa three simple but important questions about the delays, the TSE's tally of the votes, and the reports of shootings of protesters. It is late Tuesday afternoon, and I have yet to receive answers. This lack of responsiveness in such a time of crisis is troubling, and I hope it is not a new standard.

Yesterday evening, the OAS issued a statement that "the tight margin of the results, and the irregularities, errors and systemic problems that have surrounded this election do not allow the Mission to hold certainty about the results." There were also reports that large numbers of Honduran police officers, many of whom have longstanding grievances, are refusing orders to use force against the protesters. Earlier today, I was informed that there may

be at least 15 fatalities and many people injured from gunshot wounds. There are reports that the police and military fired many shots, sometimes in the air and other times at the crowds.

The importance of this election, which will determine who leads Honduras for the next 4 years, cannot be overstated. This is especially so because of the way it came about in the first place. There was already resentment toward President Hernandez for the double standard of participating in the coup against Zelaya and then orchestrating his own path to reelection. As one Honduran was quoted saying, they "are reliving the entire crisis from the coup of 2009, and the majority of people don't really like that because it brings back some ugly memories."

President Hernandez and Mr. Nasralla offer significantly different approaches to tackling the country's problems. Given the debacle of the past week and the growing popular outcry, it is apparent that establishing the credibility of the electoral process and the integrity of Honduras's democracy requires either recounting the contested ballots from each of the 5,300 polling places in the presence of representatives of the political parties, representatives of civil society, and international observers or holding a new election.

In the meantime, it is the responsibility of the Honduran Government, particularly the police and the military, to respect and defend the right of the Honduran people to freely and peacefully express their opinions.

Honduras faces a defining moment in its modern history. How the government resolves this crisis will determine the path of the country for the foreseeable future. It will also determine the extent of validity and support the next government receives from the United States because only a credible election, accepted widely by the Honduran people as free and fair, coupled with a demonstrable commitment to transparency, to freedom of expression and association, and to the rule of law, will justify that validity and support.

TRIBUTE TO SEAN J. STACKLEY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I would like to make a few remarks to honor a great American.

Sean J. Stackley served as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition from July 28, 2008, to August 3, 2017. He also served as the Acting Secretary of the Navy from January 20 to August 3, 2017. By virtue of the length of his Navy service, Secretary Stackley has become the longest serving Assistant Secretary of the Navy in history. Until Sean's service, Franklin Delano Roosevelt held the record for the longest serving Assistant Secretary of the Navy, but Sean has eclipsed that record by almost 2 years.

I first came to know Secretary Stackley as a staff member of the Sen-

ate Armed Services Committee from 2005 until the time he was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Before that, Sean graduated from the Naval Academy in 1979 and served on Active Duty in the Navy until 2005, when he retired after having been program manager for the LPD-17 Program.

It would be hard to find a more dedicated public servant who brought so much to the table and continued to give his best even after he could justifiably have moved on to an easier job. There was hardly any area of building the Navy of the future where Secretary Stackley's good judgment and broad experience has not improved the outcome. During his tenure, he was responsible for placing 90 ships, nearly 1,700 aircraft, and over 20,000 weapons under contract. He was a staunch advocate for making every dollar count and worked to employ competitive techniques on every contract where possible. He championed multiyear contracts on mature programs, including the *Arleigh Burke* class destroyer, *Virginia* class attack submarine, MV-22 tiltrotor, and the F/A-18 Super Hornet Programs which collectively saved the taxpayer over \$6 billion. He drove direct competition on many programs, including the Presidential helicopter, air and missile defense radar, ship-to-shore connector, and amphibious combat vehicle. He also introduced many creative forms of competition, including combining two different ship classes in one solicitation and introducing competition on the Aegis weapon system for the first time in 40 years.

Secretary Stackley's creativity in acquisition contributed to ensuring a strong industrial base. He promoted open architecture standards for all Navy programs to provide competitive opportunities for large, medium, and small businesses. He ensured the Department synchronized contract awards on major weapons programs so that industry could be more efficient by combining commodity and sub-vendor buys. He also challenged the Department's purchases of contractor services which saved the Department over \$2 billion. He was also an advocate for small business and proactively assigned every deputy program manager to be the small business advocate in every program office.

Secretary Stackley did not shy away from difficult problems. He commissioned an end-to-end review of CVN-78 program to keep the ship under the congressional cost cap. He was a champion for the Navy's cybersafe efforts. He implemented a settlement for the A-12 litigation, the longest running government contract case in history, by working diligently with General Dynamics and Boeing to find a win-win solution for the government and the contractors. He was always mindful of the warfighter ensuring the Urgent Needs Process was agile and responsive. He recognized the strength of working with our international part-

ners and forged strong ties on a myriad of programs, including the Joint Strike Fighter and *Columbia* class submarine.

Secretary Stackley was a staunch advocate for the acquisition workforce. He successfully argued for tools and funding that would provide necessary training and certification for the workforce. In addition, he was passionate about promoting diversity. His dedication to the workforce was most evident during the Washington Navy Yard shooting and the days and weeks that followed where he was most concerned with the well-being of the individuals impacted.

I am very sorry to see Secretary Stackley leave government service, but he has more than earned time to pursue other goals. However, I am confident that his legacy will continue with the strong team that he built and nurtured.

With that, I want to wish Sean and his wife, Terri, "fair winds and following seas."

TRIBUTE TO BONNIE KIND

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to commend Bonnie Kind, who has dedicated her professional career to serving the American people since starting her career with the Social Security Administration, SSA, as a student trainee more than 40 years ago. Bonnie currently serves as the Associate Commissioner for Budget and principal adviser to the SSA Chief Financial Officer. In her current role, she has provided vigilance and stewardship of the agency's approximately \$1 trillion program budget and nearly \$12 billion administrative budget.

Bonnie has earned the respect and gratitude of many on Capitol Hill for her diligence and assistance in making sure Members and staff have reliable information on which to make budget and appropriations decisions. She has excelled at developing relationships over the decades as she educated congressional staff about the Social Security budget. Those dealings, combined with her understanding of the Federal budget process and political knowledge, have helped Congress understand the SSA budget and the service the agency provides.

As importantly, Bonnie provides executive leadership and direction to SSA in administering a comprehensive program of budget policy, formulation, presentation, and execution. She secures and manages the financial resources needed by the agency and its employees to serve the public and to ensure stewardship of Social Security programs and resources.

Prior to her tenure as Associate Commissioner for Budget, Bonnie served as the comptroller and chief financial officer for the National Security Agency where she oversaw financial management, accounting, and budgeting activities. Before that, she served as the deputy associate commissioner of the SAA Office of Financial

Policy and Operations. Bonnie earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Maryland and a master's of business administration from Loyola University of Maryland. She also holds a number of professional certifications, including certified public accountant, certified government financial manager, certified defense financial manager, and certified acquisition professional.

Congress depends on the extensive expertise of dedicated public servants like Bonnie Kind. I extend my appreciation and congratulations to her for 40 years of dedicated service to the American people. I wish her the best in her retirement.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR REGINA RUSH-KITTLE

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Maj. Regina Rush-Kittle, a dedicated veteran and law enforcement officer whose strength and commitment to her community, her State, and her Nation merited her induction into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame this November.

Her life and career have been a series of firsts. She is an amazing, tenacious, goal-oriented person who sets high standards for herself and for others. She is well-regarded by her peers and recognized for her willingness to always give more than 100 percent.

Major Rush-Kittle moved with her family to Middletown, CT, as a young girl. She attended Middletown High School, after which she pursued a political science degree at the University of Connecticut. She subsequently obtained a master's in criminal justice at Western New England College.

While at college, Major Rush-Kittle joined the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves, where she served for 3 years. She then transferred to the Army Reserves, where she continued to serve her country for more than two decades. During that time, she was mobilized during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Impressively, Major Rush-Kittle earned the Bronze Star Medal during her tour of duty for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, where she served as the command sergeant major of the 321st Military Intelligence Battalion of Texas. She retired from the Reserves after 30 years of dedicated service.

As amazing and stellar as her career serving our country, it is her law enforcement career where Major Rush-Kittle truly made her mark.

Her interest in law enforcement arose when she began working as a corrections officer at the the York Correctional Institution, a high-security women prison in Niantic, CT. Her passion for public safety and determination to knock down barriers to female advancement would lead Major Rush-Kittle to become the first Black female patrol officer for the Middletown Po-

lice Department, as well as the first Black female drill sergeant and command sergeant major in that organization.

Continuing to shatter barriers, Major Rush-Kittle transferred to the Connecticut State Police, where she was the first African-American woman to become a State police sergeant, then a State police lieutenant, and then a major in the history of this proud and storied department. She also was the first to command a police barracks.

Her devotion to serving the Connecticut State Police led her to enroll in the 244th Session of the the FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA. She also headed the Connecticut State Police Academy. Her studies, experiences, and devotion to law enforcement have made her a role model for her peers.

Now retired from military service and law enforcement, Major Rush-Kittle is a credit to the State of Connecticut and the country thanks to her unflinching sense of duty and readiness to break barriers. I am pleased that she is an integral part of a team of military and veteran volunteers who assist me in reviewing candidates to our military academies.

I applaud her many accomplishments and hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Major Rush-Kittle for her well-earned induction into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.●

RECOGNIZING KINDRED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the students, faculty, and parents of Kindred Elementary School, located in Kindred, ND, on being awarded the 2017 National Blue Ribbon School Award.

Founded in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' academic achievement. A National Blue Ribbon Schools flag overhead has become a mark of excellence in education recognized by everyone from parents to policymakers in thousands of communities. Since the program's founding, the U.S. Department of Education has bestowed this coveted award to more than 8,500 of America's best schools.

Kindred Elementary School serves nearly 460 students and was one of three schools in North Dakota to be designated as an Exemplary High Performing School under this award. Receiving recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School signifies the hard work and dedication of the educators, students, and parents involved, and I have no doubt the students at Kindred Elementary are on a path to success. Kindred Elementary hires and retains highly effective teachers that operate using professional learning communities. This allows school staff to collaborate on a daily basis and develop

methods for continuous improvement based on student data and progress. To support its students, the school uses a multitiered approach called response-to-intervention, RtI, that offers timely support to students' academic and behavioral needs. The RtI team consists of classroom teachers, special education teachers, speech and occupational therapy staff, and other key staff. Kindred's innovative approach and commitment to developing student potential has resulted in high student outcomes that we can all be proud of.

School leadership states the "school district thrives because of the strong relationship between students, their families, community members, and the school district staff." To further the communal relationship, the school offers enrichment opportunities through lyceums, field trips, and guest presenters and performers. It is through this dedication that the school provides a tailored education that allows student, staff, and faculty to succeed.

The Kindred Public School District's mission statement reads, "Improving tomorrow, by learning today." This mission embodies all that Kindred Elementary is working to accomplish by looking at the needs of each individual student, as well as providing a safe and respectful learning environment that breeds success. I wish the very best to the community of Kindred and congratulations to all engaged at Kindred Elementary for achieving this high honor. Thank you for your commitment to our children and leaders of tomorrow.●

RECOGNIZING LEGACY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the students, faculty, and parents of Legacy Elementary School, located in West Fargo, ND, on being awarded the 2017 National Blue Ribbon School Award.

Founded in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' academic achievement. A National Blue Ribbon Schools flag overhead has become a mark of excellence in education recognized by everyone from parents to policymakers in thousands of communities. Since the program's founding, the U.S. Department of Education has bestowed this coveted award to more than 8,500 of America's best schools.

Legacy Elementary School serves nearly 540 students and was one of three schools in North Dakota to be designated as an Exemplary High Performing School under this award. Receiving recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School signifies the hard work and dedication of the educators, students, and parents involved, and I have no doubt the students at Legacy are on a path to success. The school has received the Let's Move Active Schools

National Award and the Star Award from their local Dakota Medical Foundation. These awards show Legacy's dedication towards promoting health and wellness among students and staff. Such health strategies include building wide flexible seating and personalized learning spaces, movement built into their curriculum, along with multiple health snack and food options and initiatives, which work to build both short- and long-term healthy habits for students.

As school leadership states, "At Legacy, our school Mission is: Educate. Our school Vision is: Everyone Learns." It is through this dedication that Legacy helps students excel academically, physically, emotionally, socially, and culturally. The school does so by often writing their own curricula to ensure they teach what fits students' needs and implementing programs that grow skills such as critical thinking, perseverance, problem solving, and sportsmanship. The innovation shown by the faculty at Legacy serves as a model that all schools can look towards when finding new ways to promote student growth and development.

The West Fargo Public Schools' mission statement reads, "Educating today's learners for tomorrow's world." This mission embodies all that Legacy Elementary is working to accomplish by looking at the needs of each individual student, as well as providing a healthy and respectful learning environment that breeds success. I wish the very best to the community of West Fargo and congratulations to all engaged at Legacy Elementary for achieving this high honor. Thank you for your commitment to our children and leaders of tomorrow.●

RECOGNIZING LONGFELLOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

● Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the students, faculty, and parents of Longfellow Elementary School, located in Fargo, ND, on being awarded the 2017 National Blue Ribbon School Award.

Founded in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' academic achievement. A National Blue Ribbon Schools flag overhead has become a mark of excellence in education recognized by everyone from parents to policymakers in thousands of communities. Since the program's founding, the U.S. Department of Education has bestowed this coveted award to more than 8,500 of America's best schools.

Longfellow Elementary School serves nearly 370 students and was one of three schools in North Dakota to be designated as an Exemplary High Performing School under this award. Receiving recognition as a National Blue

Ribbon School signifies the hard work and dedication of the educators, students, and parents involved, and I have no doubt students at Longfellow are on a path to success. At Longfellow Elementary, every educator serves multiple roles in their students' day-to-day activities. To best support its students, families are heavily involved in the school and its functions. Unlike many schools in the Nation, Longfellow Elementary enjoys strong engagement and support from their students' parents, making them a shining example of how our public schools can thrive through robust community support.

Longfellow is one of two elementary schools in the Fargo Public School District that provides an educational setting for students with a wide range of impairments that require extra attention. The multiple impairments magnet program provides speech, occupational, and physical therapy services to students. Cass County Public Health supports the program with regular visits by a nurse, and a music therapist visits with the class two times a week. It is through the Longfellow community that the school has been able tailor the teaching to their students' needs.

The Longfellow's vision includes, "Equitable opportunities will ensure a quality educational experience to stimulate and support all students in their intellectual, social, and personal growth." This vision statement embodies all that Longfellow Elementary is working to accomplish by including parents and family in their discussions. I wish the very best to the community of Fargo and congratulations to all engaged at Longfellow Elementary for achieving this high honor. Thank you for your commitment to our children and leaders of tomorrow.●

TRIBUTE TO VIRGIL BERNERO

● Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today I wish to pay special tribute to my friend, Virgil Bernero, who will be ending his service as mayor of Lansing, MI, at the end of this year.

This is a special opportunity for me to recognize Virg's outstanding service to the people of Lansing. I have represented Lansing throughout my years in public service, so I have had the opportunity to work closely with Virg.

Virg and I share something in common: We both began our public service careers as an Ingham County commissioner, State representative, and State senator. He was first elected mayor of Lansing in 2005. He has served with a unique passion and energy for public service. He is devoted to his family and has worked on behalf of families he has represented with the same devotion and commitment.

While mayor, Virg led Lansing through the recession and, despite facing major budget shortfalls, was able to maintain 12 consecutive balanced budgets and produce a budget surplus during each of the last 3 years.

He led efforts to attract new business investments in the city, including a \$182 million repurposing of a former electric powerplant into the headquarters of a major national insurance company. He worked to foster regional cooperation and economic development efforts and led the creation of the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, the Lansing area's first regional economic development public-private partnership.

During the automotive crisis, Virg organized Michigan mayors and led a passionate and aggressive defense of the American auto industry, which is one of Lansing and mid-Michigan's backbone industries. He founded and led the Manufacturing Alliance of Communities, a national coalition of mayors that worked to secure Federal support for our automobile industry. Since that time, General Motors has invested more than \$1 billion in their Lansing facilities and recently moved production of the Chevrolet Camaro from Canada to the Lansing Grand River assembly plant.

I am grateful for Virg's friendship and congratulate him on his years of extraordinary service. I wish him and his family all the best as he begins this new chapter in his life.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House disagreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, and asks a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and that the following Members be the managers of the conference on the part of the House:

From the Committee on Ways and Means, for consideration of the House bill and the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. NUNES, Mr. ROSKAM, Mrs. BLACK, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. NEAL, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. DOGGETT.

From the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for consideration of section 20003 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. WALDEN, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.

From the Committee on Natural Resources, for consideration of sections 20001 and 20002 of the Senate amendment and modifications committed to conference: Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. GRIJALVA.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 2:40 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 371. An act to make technical changes and other improvements to the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2192. A bill to strengthen border security, increase resources for enforcement of immigration laws, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-3593. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Bacillus thuringiensis Cry14Ab-1 Protein in or on Soybean; Temporary Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 9970-43) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3594. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prometryn; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 9970-01) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3595. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "pseudomonas fluorescens 4-hydroxyphenylpyruvate dioxygenase (HPPD-4); Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 9969-94) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3596. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Quinclorac; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 9970-05) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3597. A communication from the Chief of the Planning and Regulatory Affairs Branch, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Child Nutrition Programs: Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements" (RIN0584-AW53) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3598. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Importation of Fresh Mango Fruit From Vietnam Into the Continental United States" (RIN0579-AE25) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 29, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3599. A communication from the Program Specialist (Paperwork Reduction Act), Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting,

pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulatory Capital Rules: Retention of Certain Existing Transition Provisions for Banking Organizations That Are Not Subject to the Advanced Approaches Capital Rules" (RIN1557-AE23) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3600. A communication from the Program Specialist (Paperwork Reduction Act), Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Community Reinvestment Act Regulations" (RIN3064-AE58) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3601. A communication from the Program Specialist (Paperwork Reduction Act), Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Mandatory Contractual Stay Requirements for Qualified Financial Contracts" (RIN1557-AE05) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3602. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Inspector General, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 4, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3603. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Protection of Stratospheric Ozone: Revision to References for Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Sector to Incorporate Latest Edition of Certain Industry, Consensus-Based Standards" (FRL No. 9968-24-OAR) (RIN2060-AT53) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3604. 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 York; Cross-State Air Pollution Rule; NOx Annual and SO2 Group 1 Trading Programs" (FRL No. 9971-25-Region 2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3605. 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; 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule" (FRL No. 9971-40-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3606. 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; AK; Updates to Materials Incorporated by Reference" (FRL No. 9970-27-Region 10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3607. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Depart-

ment of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "The Money Follows the Person (MFP) Rebalancing Demonstration"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3608. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2018 Cost-of-Living Adjustments to the Internal Revenue Code Tax Tables and Other Items" (Rev. Proc. 2017-58) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3609. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-184, "Dining with Dogs Temporary Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3610. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-185, "Credit Protection Fee Waiver Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3611. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-186, "Ethic Board Quorum Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3612. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safe Harbor for Deteriorating Concrete Foundations Caused by the Mineral Pyrrhotite" (Rev. Proc. 2017-60) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3613. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-187, "Southwest Waterfront Parking Enforcement Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3614. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-188, "Campaign Finance Reform and Transparency Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3615. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-189, "Washington Metrorail Safety Commission Board of Directors Appointment Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3616. A communication from the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Corporation for National and Community Service's Response and Report on Final Action for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3617. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 and the Semi-Annual Report of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3618. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Semiannual Report of the Office of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3619. A communication from the Vice Chairman, Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3620. A communication from the Board Members of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3621. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Claims Procedure for Plans Providing Disability Benefits; 90-Day Delay of Applicability Date" (RIN1210-AB39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 29, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3622. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Veterans Affairs' Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3623. A communication from the Acting Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3624. A communication from the Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3625. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3626. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "18-Month Extension of Transition Period and Delay of Applicability Dates; Best Interest Contract Exemption (PTE 2016-01); Class Exemption for Principal Transactions in Certain Assets Between Investment Advice Fiduciaries and Employee Benefit Plans and IRAs (PTE 2016-02); Prohibited Transaction Exemption 84-24 for Certain Transactions Involving Insurance Agents and Brokers, Pension Consultants, Insurance Companies, and Investment Company Principal Underwriters (PTE 84-24)" (ZRIN1210-ZA27) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 29, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3627. A communication from the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Agency,

Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of FDA-Approved Products of Oral Solutions Containing Dronabinol [(\pm)-delta-9-trans-tetrahydrocannabinol (delta-9-THC)] in Schedule II" (Docket No. DEA-344) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3628. A communication from the Solicitor General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an opinion of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania (Keyes v. Sessions); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3629. A communication from the Chief Human Capital Officer, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Chief Counsel, Office of Advocacy, Small Business Administration, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC-3630. A communication from the Chief Human Capital Officer, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Deputy Administrator, Small Business Administration, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC-3631. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting a report relative to additional fiscal year 2018 funding for disaster relief; to the Committee on the Budget.

EC-3632. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's thirteenth annual report on ethanol market concentration; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3633. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Fiscal Year 2016 Methane Hydrate Program"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3634. 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 "Technical Amendment to List of User Fee Airports: International Airport, Rome, NY; Van Nuys Airport, Van Nuys, CA; Cobb County Airport-McCollum Field, Kennesaw, GA; and Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport, Monroe, NC" (CBP Dec. 17-18) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 27, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3635. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the establishment of the danger pay allowance for Guayaquil, Ecuador; Quito, Ecuador; Asuncion, Paraguay; N'djamena, Chad; and Abuja, Nigeria; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3636. A communication from the Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits" (29 CFR Part 4022) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 29, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3637. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule en-

titled "Senior Community Service Employment Program; Performance Accountability" (RIN1205-AB79) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3638. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a petition to add workers who were employed at the Carborundum Company site in Niagara Falls, New York, to the Special Exposure Cohort; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3639. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a petition to add workers who were employed at the Rocky Flats Plant in Golden, Colorado, to the Special Exposure Cohort; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3640. A communication from the Director, Office of Administration, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions from the Unanticipated Needs Account for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3641. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to the activities and operations of the Public Integrity Section, Criminal Division, for 2016, and the nationwide federal law enforcement effort against public corruption; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3642. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Annual Report to Congress on the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-142. A petition from a citizen of the State of Texas relative to proposed legislation; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. HOEVEN, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment:

S. 1223. A bill to repeal the Klamath Tribe Judgment Fund Act (Rept. No. 115-190).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 447. A bill to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues.

By Mr. ISAKSON, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, without amendment:

S. 2193. An original bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve health care for veterans, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CRAPO for the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

*Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

By Mr. CORKER for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Luxembourg.

Nominee: James Randolph Evans.

Post: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Luxembourg.

Nominated: 9/28/17.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, donee, date, and amount:

Self, Spouse, Children and Spouses, Parents, Grandparents, Brothers and Spouses, Sisters and Spouses: See Attachment A.

ATTACHMENT A

Linda Evans, John McCallum for Congress, 2013, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, Pridemore for Congress, 2013, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, The Guardian Fund, 2013, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, Westmoreland, Lynn A., 2013, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, Shannon for Senate, 2014, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, Nathan Deal for Governor, Inc., 2014, \$6,300.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2012, \$2,500.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2013, \$32,400.00.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2014, \$32,400.00.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2015, \$25,000.00.

J. Randolph Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2016, \$270.

J. Randolph Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2016, \$750.

J. Randolph Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2016, \$1,000.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican Party, Inc., 2017, \$225.

James Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2012, \$800.00

James Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2012, \$1,000.00.

James Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2016, \$350.

Randy Evans, Romney for President, Inc., 2012, \$2,500.

Randy Evans, Republican National Committee, 2013, \$350.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2013, \$125.

Randy Evans, Nathan Deal for Governor, Inc., Primary 2014, \$6,300.

Randy Evans, Nathan Deal for Governor, Inc., General 2014, \$6,300.

Randy Evans, Senate District 12, 2015, \$500.

Randy Evans, Republican National Committee, 2016, \$300.

Randy Evans, Republican National Committee, 2016, \$300.

Randy Evans, Republican National Committee, 2016, \$19,600.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, 2016, \$130.

Randy Evans, Donald J. Trump for President, Inc., 2016, \$2,700.

Randy Evans, Trump for President, 2016, \$25,000.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, 2016, \$270.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, 2016, \$750.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, 2016, \$1,000.

*Kenneth J. Braithwaite, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Norway.

Nominee: Rear Admiral Kenneth J. Braithwaite, USN(ret).

Post: Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, donee, date, and amount:

1. Self: Santorum, Richard J via Santorum 2000, 08/25/2000, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 03/15/2002, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 11/18/2002, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 05/13/2003, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 05/25/2003, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 11/01/2004, \$500.00; Bush, George W via Bush-Cheney '04 (Primary) Inc, 03/24/2004, \$250.00; Pitts, Joseph R. via Friends of Joe Pitts, 06/28/2006, \$250.00; The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania—Federal Political Action Committee, 03/20/2007, \$250.00; The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania—Federal Political Action Committee, 02/27/2008, \$500.00; Meehan, Patrick L. Mr. via Pat Meehan for Congress, 09/13/2010, \$500.00; Vizient, Inc., Political Action Committee, 06/06/2012, \$1000.00; Vizient, Inc., Political Action Committee, 12/28/2013, \$500.00; Vizient, Inc., Political Action Committee, 05/07/2014, \$500.00; Trump Make America Great Again Committee, 11/08/2016, \$500.00; Trump, Donald J via Donald J. Trump for President, Inc., 11/08/2016, \$400.00.

2. Spouse: Melissa Losito Braithwaite: Trump Make America Great Again Committee, 10/15/2016, \$100.00.

3. Children and Spouses: Grace Anne Braithwaite (age 15): None; Harrison Anthony Braithwaite (age 10): None.

4. Parents: Kenneth J. Braithwaite (Deceased); Sylvia J. (Bell) Braithwaite: None.

5. Grandparents: Rose Bell (Deceased); Gene Bell (Deceased); Franklin Braithwaite (Deceased); Anna Braithwaite (Deceased).

6. Brothers and Spouses: Murray P. Braithwaite: None.

7. Sisters and Spouses:

November 27, 2017.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
*Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*

Hon. BEN CARDIN,
*Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MEMBER CARDIN: When completing my Committee Questionnaire and Federal Campaign Contribution Report, some contributions were inadvertently left off the list. Part B. Question 6 regarding Political Contributions and the Federal Campaign Contribution Report should have included the following:

1. April 14, 2011—\$187.50—to the HAPAC, the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania) https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2012&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2011&max_date=12%2F31%2F2012.

2. February 24, 2011—\$900—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2012&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2011&max_date=12%2F31%2F2012.

transaction period=2012&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2011&max_date=12%2F31%2F2012).

3. August 5, 2010—\$113.63—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2010&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2009&max_date=12%2F31%2F2010.

4. March 2, 2010—\$750—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2010&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2009&max_date=12%2F31%2F2010.

5. October 12, 2009—\$250—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2010&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2009&max_date=12%2F31%2F2010.

6. February 19, 2009—\$500—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2010&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2009&max_date=12%2F31%2F2010.

7. July 16, 2008—\$75—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2008&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2007&max_date=12%2F31%2F2008.

8. August 17, 2007—\$87.50—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2008&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2007&max_date=12%2F31%2F2008.

9. April 26, 2001—\$500—to the Johnson for Congress Committee https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2002&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2001&max_date=12%2F31%2F2002.

Thank you and the Committee for consideration of my nomination.

Sincerely,

KENNETH J. BRAITHWAITE,
Rear Admiral, USN(ret).

*M. Lee McClenny, of Washington, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Paraguay

Nominee: M. Lee McClenny.
Post: Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, donee:

1. Self: None, N/A, N/A.

2. Spouse: Katherine Latimer: None, N/A, N/A.

3. Children and Spouses: Blake Andrew McClenny: None, N/A, N/A; Katherine Marie McClenny: None, N/A, N/A.

4. Parents: Myron Lee McClenny—deceased; Harlean Kay McClenny: None, N/A, N/A.

5. Grandparents: Dean Preston McClenny—deceased; Myra Rindom McClenny—deceased;

Wayne Melville Wilsey—deceased; Ora Tyson Wilsey—deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: None.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Kristin Kay (McClenny) Kuppe: None, N/A, N/A; James Brugge Kuppe: None, N/A, N/A.

*Eric M. Ueland, of Oregon, to be an Under Secretary of State (Management).

*Brock D. Bierman, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

*Yleem D. S. Poblete, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Verification and Compliance).

*Christopher Ashley Ford, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Security and Non-Proliferation).

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 2192. A bill to strengthen border security, increase resources for enforcement of immigration laws, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. ISAKSON:

S. 2193. An original bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve health care for veterans, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; placed on the calendar.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mr. NELSON):

S. 2194. A bill to remove a limitation on a prohibition relating to permits for discharges incidental to normal operation of vessels; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 260

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 260, a bill to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board.

S. 298

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 373

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 373, a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress a report on hearing loss, tinnitus, and noise pollution due to small arms fire.

S. 422

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 422, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 447

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 447, a bill to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 498

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 498, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Defense to use only human-based methods for training members of the Armed Forces in the treatment of severe combat injuries, and for other purposes.

S. 954

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 954, a bill to prevent harassment at institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

S. 974

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 974, a bill to promote competition in the market for drugs and biological products by facilitating the timely entry of lower-cost generic and biosimilar versions of those drugs and biological products.

S. 1050

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1050, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

S. 1498

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1498, a bill to establish in the Smithsonian Institution a comprehensive American women's history museum, and for other purposes.

S. 1539

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Montana

(Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1539, a bill to protect victims of stalking from gun violence.

S. 1693

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1693, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify that section 230 of that Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sex trafficking.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a home infusion therapy services temporary transitional payment under the Medicare program.

S. 1795

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1795, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve the financial aid process for homeless children and youths and foster care children and youth.

S. 1816

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1816, a bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to enhance fraud alert procedures and provide free access to credit freezes, and for other purposes.

S. 1845

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1845, a bill to amend the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act to provide for additional procedures for families with children under the age of 6, and for other purposes.

S. 2005

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HETTKAMP) were added as cosponsors of S. 2005, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the publicly traded partnership ownership structure to energy power generation projects and transportation fuels, and for other purposes.

S. 2006

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2006, a bill to require breast density reporting to physicians and patients by facilities that perform mammograms, and for other purposes.

S. 2101

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2101, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the crew of the USS *Indianapolis*, in

recognition of their perseverance, bravery, and service to the United States.

S. 2109

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2109, a bill to count revenues from military and veteran education programs toward the limit on Federal revenues that certain proprietary institutions of higher education are allowed to receive for purposes of section 487 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 2127

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2127, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States merchant mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II.

S. 2135

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2135, a bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

S. 2141

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2141, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to reform procedures for determinations on disposition of charges and the convening of courts-martial for certain offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and for other purposes.

S. 2152

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 2152, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for assistance for victims of child pornography, and for other purposes.

S. 2163

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2163, a bill to expand school choice in the District of Columbia.

S. 2164

At the request of Mr. KING, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2164, a bill to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 respecting the scoring of preventive health savings.

S. RES. 139

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 139, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran's

state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

S. RES. 150

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 150, a resolution recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I have 8 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 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, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on S.2155 "The Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Act" and the nomination of Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-366 to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Timothy R. Petty, of Indiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, and Linda Capuano, of Texas, to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a business meeting and hearing on the following nominations: nominations of Eric M. Ueland, of Oregon, to be an Under Secretary (Management), and James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador to Luxembourg, both of the Department of State.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "The President, Congress, and Shared Authority".

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is author-

ized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-430 to conduct a hearing entitled "The Cost of Prescription Drugs: An examination of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Report 'Making Medicines Affordable: A National Imperative'".

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 on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-430 to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Kenneth L. Marcus, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and Johnny Collett, of Kentucky, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, both of the Department of Education, and Scott A. Mugno, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary, and William Beach, of Kansas, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, both of the Department of Labor.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 3 p.m., in room SH-219 to hold a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY

The Subcommittee on Energy of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my intern, Scott La Rochelle, be granted privileges of the floor for the remainder of the day.

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

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2192

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2192) to strengthen border security, increase resources for enforcement of immigration laws, and for other purposes.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 6, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Wednesday, December 6; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of our Democratic colleagues.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

CONFIRMATION OF KIRSTJEN
NIELSEN

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, we just concluded a few minutes ago the confirmation of the President's nominee for the next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

As it turns out, the Presiding Officer is the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, which has jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security. I have the privilege of being the immediate past chairman of the committee. The Presiding Officer and I have worked together on a wide range of issues that actually pertain to the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security.

I don't want to speak out of turn, but I believe both the Presiding Officer, who is as well the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and I believe that one of the most important ingredients of success of any organization—I don't care whether it is a football team, a body such as the U.S. Senate, a hospital, a school, a State, a country—the key is always leadership. The key is leaders who are always interested in figuring out what is the right thing to do; people who believe in the Golden Rule, treating other people the way they want to be treated; and leaders who focus on excellence in everything they do. They surround themselves with the best people they can find. They embrace the idea that if a program or whatever is not perfect, let's make it better. The best leaders with whom I have been privileged to serve are those who just don't give up. When they are sure they are right, they just don't give up.

We have had a series of leaders, and I have been privileged to know every

Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security since the very beginning of time, when I served as Governor and when I served in the Congress. I served with the first Secretary we had and others who have succeeded him—most recently, John Kelly, retired Marine four-star general who came from his command in SOUTHCOM to become Secretary of Homeland Security. He is now at the White House serving as the Chief of Staff to the President. We are grateful to him for his service.

Since he has moved on to that post, it has left a vacancy to lead the Department of Homeland Security. I think Elaine Duke is filling in quite nicely as the Acting Secretary. She was previously Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security. Now that Kirstjen Nielsen has been confirmed, we will see whether Elaine Duke will step back and be the Deputy. I think a number of us hope that she will, but that is not our decision to make.

The vote today in favor of Kirstjen Nielsen's confirmation was, I believe, 62 ayes and 37 nays. Every now and then, we have the opportunity to vote and it is a close call. Not all of our votes are easy; some are more difficult than others. But for a number of us, this was a close call.

I think Kirstjen Nielsen is arguably bright. She is well-spoken. She has appeared before our committee and taken any number of questions. She was asked and has answered hundreds of questions from committee members and questions for the record. She has been good enough to meet with me not once but twice. I said to her yesterday when we met that I think she is a person with a good heart and good values—again, well-spoken and bright. She is especially strong with respect to cyber security.

The real question mark for me—one of the question marks for me, among others—was, for someone who has at best only led organizations with maybe a couple dozen people to now be thrust into—or selected to serve in this position, where she will be leading 240,000 people at the Department of Homeland Security, spread out all over the world, is a daunting challenge. As someone who has been privileged to spend 23 years of my life in the Navy as a naval flight officer, then as a treasurer, a Congressman, a Governor, a Senator, and I led the National Governors Association—for me, leading an organization of that size would be daunting. I would expect that the same is true for Kirstjen Nielsen.

John Kelly, who for 6 months was our Secretary, has a lot of confidence in her, and I have a lot of confidence in John Kelly. JOHN MCCAIN and I introduced him as the ranking member and the chairman when General Kelly was nominated to be Secretary. JOHN MCCAIN sat on one side of the nominee, and I sat on the other. I think we have taken his recommendation to heart, and that was maybe the tie-breaker for some of us.

When I spoke with Kirstjen yesterday, we talked about her core values and what guides her in making decisions. I think some of it is faith-based, which I find encouraging; the idea of treating other people the way we want to be treated; the willingness to welcome people to our home, our country, who are strangers.

So we will see how it plays out. I think it is critically important that—just as I try to surround myself with people who have strength and fill in for my weaknesses, my hope is that is exactly what will happen when she assumes the responsibility to lead the Department of Homeland Security.

So I would say to Kirstjen Nielsen: Congratulations on your confirmation, and we look forward to working with you, hopefully agreeing a lot more often than we disagree. Good luck and God bless.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. CARPER. Next, Mr. President, I have a couple of charts here. I don't know whether the Presiding Officer can see them from where he is sitting. I can barely see them from right here.

The first chart we are going to take a look at deals with the—on this side over here, we have median household income for Americans since 1987. Over on this side, we have corporate profits in the billions of dollars.

When we come back here to 1987, we look at the orange line here, and that is median household income in 2016 dollars. The median household income in 1987 was just a shade over \$50,000. All of these years later, in 2017, it is just a little bit higher. It has gone up a little bit but not a whole lot—maybe close to \$60,000, but I don't know that it is any higher than that. It has gone up a little bit, really, over the last few years.

The green line here on our chart is corporate profits. When we go back to 1987, corporate profits were equal to about—it looks like \$30,000 billion, and if I am not mistaken, that would be maybe \$30 trillion. I hope I have that right. That was 1987. If you look at what has happened, it has gone up and down. This is during the great recession when we fell off the cliff and almost fell off the world. In 2007, 2008, we started to climb back out of it. Today, the corporate profits have roughly doubled in this country since 1987—roughly doubled—while median household income is growing a tiny bit but actually not that much.

Let's look at the next chart, and then I will not speak from the charts. I guess the lesson here again is that corporate profits have gone up rather nicely. There were some ups and downs because of the great recession, but they are on an uptick now.

This is a look at the national deficit and debt. I know the Presiding Officer has a great concern about this.

I came to the House I guess in 1983. I had been State treasurer for a State

that had the worst deficit in the country. The State of Delaware tied with Puerto Rico. We were a mess.

Finally, Pete du Pont, a Republican, did a wonderful job for 8 years as Governor. I had the opportunity to serve with him in the State treasury and later on to become the Governor of the State of Delaware, when we went to a triple A credit rating for the first time in State history.

I came here in 1983 as a Congressman who was concerned about debts and deficits. My sense is that here in the Senate and the House, we don't have a lot of deficit hawks these days. If we do, their voices are not heard very loudly. We are on a course that is unsustainable in terms of our accumulation of more debt.

This is an interesting chart because it goes back to really the beginning of World War II, the war my dad was in and my uncle served in. There is a lot of red ink here, and it shows the deficit as a percentage of gross domestic product, and it reached about 30 percent right in the middle of World War II. After the war, we have the green down here where we actually had some surpluses in the late 1940s and the early 1950s. We actually had a surplus in 1968. Then we went from 1968 to about 1998 and never balanced the budget, all of those years at one time. The last 4 years of the Clinton administration, we balanced our budget four times. It was a bipartisan deal.

The chairman of the House Budget Committee, if I am not mistaken, was a Republican from Ohio, John Kasich, who is now the Governor of Ohio. John and I came to the House together in 1983. He came as a deficit hawk as well. He and the Clinton administration obviously did a nice job to help to balance four budgets. We haven't done so well since then. Since then, we have shown, right from here up to the present, which would be right around there, one deficit after the other—deficits that peaked out over the last year of George W. Bush's administration, when we were again falling into the great recession, and we have spent a lot of money in stimulus to try to get us out of recession.

The debt dropped from about \$1.4 trillion per year down to about one-third that much, and now it is starting to go up again. The debt last year—the year that ended on September 30—the deficit had bounced back up to \$666 billion again in 1 year—a lot of money. The prospect going forward is not encouraging; it is actually discouraging.

The tax cut bill that was passed in this Chamber just a few days ago—last Saturday morning, in the middle of the night—called for tax breaks, some for individuals for a while, some for corporations that tend to be more permanent in nature. But for me, maybe the most troubling aspect of the tax bill that was enacted last Saturday morning, aside from the way it was pushed through, is the idea that we got, right here on the Senate floor, I think some-

time around the middle of the evening last Friday night, a 400-page amendment, over 400 pages that we had never read, never seen, with scribbling on the side of the pages. The idea was that somehow we were supposed to read that and understand it and then vote it up or down in an amendment in like 4 or 5 hours. Good luck. That just doesn't happen. That would be the triumph of man's hope over experience.

I always ask these four questions when people ask about what we should do in tax reform. I say, No. 1, it ought to be fair. What we have actually passed is something where most of the benefits, the lion's share, go to people who are, frankly, very wealthy. Folks who are lower and lower middle income may realize some benefits in the first few years following the implementation of the new tax cut, but over time—say, by 2025—families with incomes up to \$75,000 per family are going to be realizing not a net gain from the tax cut but actually a net loss, which is not good.

I always ask: Is it fair? I think it is not fair when you look at the numbers and see how middle-income folks fare and those who happen to be wealthier fare.

The second question I always ask is this: Will it foster economic growth or diminish it? I focus a lot of my time and energy on economic growth, job creation, and job preservation. Senators, Presidents, and Governors don't create jobs. We create a nurturing environment for job creation, job preservation, and workforce, transportation infrastructure, protection of intellectual property rights, public safety, access to water and wastewater. There are a lot of things that contribute to economic growth and so forth. Tax policy is important. Commonsense regulation is important as well.

But my second question is this: Does the tax reform bill that we passed foster economic growth? Not really. To a modest extent, some, but not really. One of the things it does is it suggests uncertainty and the lack of predictability going forth, which I don't think businesses really care for.

One area where we, frankly, decided not to spend any money this time is the area where we could actually get the biggest bang for our buck in terms of growing GDP. We have a transportation infrastructure that is woefully inadequate these days, in terrible shape—roads, highways, bridges, rail, ports, and airports. We have many broad areas in the country that don't have access to the internet.

We just passed a tax bill that is going to increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. Unfortunately, none of that goes to pay for or to make investments in things that would grow GDP by a lot and would provide employment opportunities—not just for a couple hundred thousand people but for millions of people, over the next decade or so. None of that is there.

The third question I always look at in terms of tax reform is this: Does it

simplify the Tax Code or make it more complex? The new provision that was adopted is going to increase by this much the thickness of the Tax Code, or by about another 15 or 20 percent—not making it simpler or easier to understand, but actually more difficult.

The last piece I consider is this: What is the effect on the deficit? Pumping up the deficit by another \$1.5 trillion is making the situation even worse.

We are going to go to conference now, the House and Senate. My hope is that it will be more bipartisan than what we saw here in the Senate. It needs to be. I quoted last week and I quoted again today an old African-American proverb: If you want to go fast, travel alone. If you want to go far, travel together. Our Republican friends, at least on this side of the Congress, for the most part have chosen to go fast and to go alone. That is unfortunate. The last time we did tax reform, we did it together. It took 3 years, but it was a more lasting and, I think, a better outcome.

DACA

Mr. CARPER. I want to pivot for just a moment, Mr. President, and talk about workforce. Most people, when they think of Dreamers and DACA, think of young people who were born in other countries and maybe at a very early age were brought here by their parents and maybe have no recollection of the countries they grew up in. But they have been here now. They came here, were raised here, and were educated here, many of them in our public schools. A number of them had the opportunity to go to college.

Delaware State University is a historically Black university in Dover and is the home of the Hornets. It is a wonderful land grant school that I have been heavily invested in as Governor and even now to make sure they rise and continue to improve. I am very proud of all of the progress that has been made there. I was invited by their president, Harry Williams, to come to their campus a couple of months ago. We met with Dreamers, "DACAs," students born in other countries who were brought here by their parents years ago.

I have met a lot of college students in my day. I have been joined on the floor here by Senator DURBIN from Illinois. He has probably met at least as many as I have—probably more, because he is from a bigger State.

I don't think I have ever been more impressed by a group of college students in my life than the young men and women I met that day. We literally happened to be there at 11 in the morning that day, when the President's administration announced that the time for the Dreamers was going to expire in 6 months, unless Congress was somehow able to put together an agreement and pass legislation—which is hard to do without the support of the administration.

I was there with young people that day. I will never forget what a young man said. I think he was born in Central America—either Honduras, Guatemala, or El Salvador. This was right on the heels of the problem of recognizing these young people and celebrating their promise and potential. Right in the middle, we got an announcement, learning that the administration had just announced about sending these folks home in 6 months—not really home, because their home is here, but back to the places where they were born.

There were about five or six students, all undergrads—freshmen, sophomores. One young man had come here maybe from Guatemala, and he stood up and said: As a young person, I honestly don't remember ever living in my native country. The only country I remember is this country.

I grew up in public schools. Every day, we would start our school day in class, in home room, by standing, putting our hands over our hearts, and pledging allegiance to the United States of America.

He said: This is my home. This is my country. This is the only home I have ever really known.

He then went on to tell about his aspirations.

Those kids are smart and have parents who are engaged in their education and have high expectations for their children. A number of the students are working not one but two jobs to help support themselves through school. As a Navy ROTC midshipman at Ohio State, I worked two jobs to help pay the bills. These students are too. They are taking courses that include math, science, and physics. They want to do the kind of work that, frankly, a lot of people in this country—some want to serve in the military, some want to be in public safety, some want to be educators, some want to be scientists. They want to do all kinds of things. This is a time when we have across the country some 4 million to 5 million jobs that are literally going unfilled today, and people who maybe would like to do those jobs don't have the requisite skills to do them, maybe they don't have the interest in doing the jobs, or maybe they can't pass a drug test. But at a time when we have 3 million or 4 million jobs that are vacant, unfilled, and employers are pleading for qualified applicants, that somehow we are going to send 700,000 or 800,000 Dreamers back to wherever they were born makes no sense.

One of the loudest voices we have heard in this debate is that it is not just a fairness argument for the Dreamers, in terms of turning our backs on their aspirations and hopes, but that it is in our self-interest as a nation, in terms of a stronger economy, to keep them here.

Why would we educate them here and they learn values here, and then we ship them off to another country to

compete with us, to start businesses of their own, instead of doing that here?

I suggest that we listen to the employers of this country. We don't always agree with everything that the U.S. Chambers of Commerce or State Chambers of Commerce say, but in this case they are absolutely right.

I have a 3-minute statement that I would like to read, if I could, from one of our Dreamers. Could I do that, I ask the Senator, our Whip, from Illinois?

This is about a woman living in Wilmington, DE, which is where my wife and I live. Her name is Kay-Dean Hayden. This is a portion of a short email she recently sent to me:

My name Kay-Dean, a community builder who happens to be a DACA recipient. I was born in Jamaica but I have lived in the U.S. since I was 7 or 8 years old. I grew up in Delaware and moved to New York in 2012 and moved back [to Delaware] recently after 5½ years [in New York].

I am approaching 30 years old on March 1st, so I've been here [in the United States] for almost 22-23 years.

My grandmother raised myself and two of my cousins. I grew up not really understanding my immigration status or the implications it would have on my reality and dreams. I missed out on opportunities, but I assumed it was due to our financial lack. My grandmother worked hard but she couldn't read or write so this limited her.

After unjustly gaining a juvenile record because of poor representation and ignorance of my rights, I decided I would become a lawyer, not fully understanding that my immigration status would potentially bar me from obtaining that dream.

After that summer, I gained a better understanding of my status and why I couldn't really get a summer job or travel. In order to truly cope, I determined that if I worked hard enough, surely I could attain all my hopes and dreams.

I told my guidance counselor what I understood about my immigration status and heard nothing but disappointment, I was discouraged but I remained determined. I believed God would reward my hard-work and faithfulness. So I saw [a] different guidance counselor my 12th grade year, in tears, pleading for help. She looked at my records (grades, SAT score and activities) and by the grace of God she connected me with a family member who worked with international students at the local community college. With God's grace I had the privilege of attending Delaware Technical and Community College on a full scholarship.

In 2009, I graduated with my Associates in Business Administration [with Concentrations in] Marketing Management. Upon graduating, God opened the door and I was accepted to Goldey-Beacom College with scholarship assistance . . . I completed my degrees in 2011, and graduated in 2012 with my Bachelors in Business Administration [with Concentrations in] Financial Management.

After graduating from school and living and working in New York, Kay-Dean moved back to Delaware. She wrote:

I currently work with a program that provides mentorship opportunity for minorities and under-served youth who are interested in working in the medical field. I have been absolutely blessed to walk through the doors I have though they were not the ones I originally pictured. I have had the pleasure of helping and building up others, especially young people.

I thought for sure DACA would begin to allow me the chance to finally not only build up others, but myself as well.

But with Mr. Trump as President and his ending of the DACA Program and whispers of immigration raids, I fight to hold on to my dreams. My DACA status ends in March and with it all I have worked so hard to build over the last 4 years.

I wrote this long email to simply ask that you fight for people like me. We didn't choose to be here but we are grateful to be here.

It is here where we've grown, cried, dreamed and worked hard for our American Dream. Here is where those we hold dear reside.

It is my prayer that you will fight for me and others like me. It is my prayer that you will be our voice in congress. It is my prayer that you will humanize us to politicians who have marginalized and demonized us. It is my prayer that you would fight for us as if we were yours because truth be told, WE ARE.

Your prayer has been heard.

I just want to say to my colleague Senator DURBIN of Illinois, thank you for years of leadership on this issue to do the right thing, to treat other people as we would want to be treated if in their shoes and, frankly, to do the right things in terms of strengthening this economy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Delaware. He and I came to the House of Representatives together a few years back, and we have had the pleasure and honor of serving together in the Senate. When he is on my team, I feel much stronger because I know TOM CARPER is a person of values, principles, and hard work, and he really takes this job seriously. His State is lucky to have him, and I am lucky to count him as a friend. I thank him for joining me on this important issue.

Sixteen years ago, I introduced a bill addressing young people brought to America by their parents who, frankly, were young, didn't really know much about the immigration experience, grew up in the United States thinking they were just like all the other kids in the classroom, and then realized one day they weren't.

You see, they are not legal. Their parents didn't do it properly, didn't file the right papers. I am not holding it against their parents. Let me add that quickly. Their parents were doing the very best for the family they could. They were taking risks that many of us would take any day for a son or daughter to have a chance to live a good life.

Here were these young people in the United States undocumented. What were they to do? They didn't know that old country where their parents came from. They may not even be able to speak the language of that country, and here they were in the United States. They thought things would work out, some way or another. Time passed, and it didn't.

We have a broken immigration system. We have a lot of gaps in the system, and they were caught up in one of

them. Sixteen years ago, I introduced a bill, and here is what it said. If you came to the United States as a child, if you grew up in this country, you didn't have any serious problems with the law, and you graduated from school, we were going to give you a chance, a chance to earn your way into legal status. You could do it by furthering your education, volunteering for the military. There were a lot of ways to do it. We said to these young people: This will be your chance.

That bill was introduced a long time ago, and it has never become the law. At one point when President Obama was in the Office of the Presidency, I wrote him a letter with 20 of my colleagues in the Senate and asked him to find a way, if he could, to protect these young people from being deported out of America, and he did. They called it DACA. The DACA Program said, if you are one of the people who, by definition under the DREAM Act, would be eligible, you can stay in the United States if you step up and pay about \$500 in a filing fee, go through a serious criminal background check, and then we will give you a temporary 2-year protection from deportation—2 years that you can work legally in the United States and come back and see us if you want to renew it.

At the end of the day, about 800,000 young people in America did that. They paid their fee. They went through the background check, they submitted all their information to our government, and they were protected.

Just 3 months ago, President Donald Trump abolished DACA and said, as of March 5 next year, it is gone. What does that mean for these young people? It means that as of March 5 of next year, many of them will be subject to deportation and subject to losing the jobs they have or being unable to finish school because they can't work.

I have met a lot of those young people. I am sure Senator HASSAN has met some. I know Senator CARPER has. He just read one of their stories. They are heartbroken, and they are scared. They worry about what is going to happen to them and their families when March 5 rolls around.

For weeks, months since President Trump's announcement, I have come to the floor and asked: For goodness' sake, can't we agree—Democrats and Republicans—to fix this problem? President Trump challenged us: Do your job, Congress. Pass a law.

That is what we are supposed to do. Here we are, 3 months later, and it hasn't been done. What I hear from the other side of the aisle is, give us a little more time; we will try to get to it next year.

March 5, 2018, DACA is over and finished. Waiting several weeks is bad enough. Waiting several months is unacceptable. I will tell you why it is. We know this needs to be done now. Today, 34 Republicans in the House of Representatives sent a letter to the Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN, calling for

Congress to pass legislation to protect Dreamers this year—34 Republicans. They said: "It is imperative that Republicans and Democrats come together to solve this problem now and not wait until next year"—34 Republicans in the House. How many bipartisan things go on around here anymore? Not many. Here is one. I salute these Members of the House. I salute the four Republican Senators who joined me in cosponsoring the Dream Act. They, I think, have stuck their necks out, and I respect them so much for it. I will stand up for them because of it. I thank them for that. I know why they are doing it. They are not doing it for me. They shouldn't, and I am sure they are not. They are doing it for these young people. I will tell you without fail, when you meet them, they convert you in a minute.

For the last several years, I have come to the floor to tell their stories. I am told the one I am going to tell right now is the 99th time I have told a story like this. Each time I tell one of these stories, it makes the case for why we need to do something to help these young people and do it quickly.

Let me show you this wonderful young lady here. Her name is Blanca Morales. Blanca Morales was brought to the United States by her parents from Mexico when she was 5 years old. She grew up in Santa Ana, CA. Growing up, she took care of her two younger siblings while her parents worked in factories and in the agriculture fields of California.

She was quite a student. In high school, she was named one of the top 100 students in the county. She was active in community service, mentoring students who couldn't complete high school without help. She attended a community college, Santa Ana College. I might add, because she is undocumented, she didn't qualify for any Federal Government assistance. Going to college in that circumstance means working, scraping by, putting things off, sacrificing to get through. She did it. She majored in chemistry and biology. She was part of Phi Beta Kappa, an international honors society. She won first academic team in the All-USA Academic Competition. She was her class's valedictorian, with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Blanca, after graduation, attended the University of California, Irvine. She majored in neurobiology. At UC Irvine, she graduated with honors magna cum laude. After obtaining this premed degree, she couldn't land a job in the medical field because she is undocumented in America.

Then, in 2012, everything changed. President Obama established the DACA Program I mentioned earlier, which allowed Blanca, for the first time in her life, to get a permit to legally work in America. Last year, Blanca Morales was accepted to the Harvard School of Medicine. She has remained involved in community service, mentoring students, teaching health classes at a

community health center, and volunteering as a translator at clinics for Spanish-speaking patients.

Close to 70 Dreamers are enrolled in medical schools around the country just like she is. Without DACA, these Dreamers will never become doctors. Why? They are going to be deported back to their countries if they are not lucky. If they happen to be able to stay, they cannot legally work in America without DACA status. You cannot finish medical school and go on to a residency without a work permit, without being able to legally work in America. They cannot legally work without DACA protection, and President Trump has ended it.

Are we going to be a stronger nation if we deport her, tell her to leave, go back to Mexico, which she left when she was 5 years of age, give up on all the education she has put on the board—at the community college where she was leading her class, on to get her degrees, on to be accepted to Harvard Medical School. The answer is clear. America would be less if she left.

The Association of American Medical Colleges reports the Nation faces a doctor shortage, which is only going to get worse. Both the AMA and the Association of American Medical Colleges have warned that ending DACA will make this problem worse. They have urged Congress to do something.

Blanca wrote me a letter, and here is what she said.

It took me eight years from graduating from the university to enter medical school. Without DACA or better yet, a formal way to become a full member of society, I am left to live in the shadows. I don't know if I will be able to finish my medical training without a permanent solution to my immigration status. Please help me keep my dream of becoming a physician alive.

When my colleagues come to the floor and say we are just too busy here to take up this issue, I wish they would have a chance to meet this spectacular young woman. I wish they would consider what she is asking us to do. She is asking us to do our job. We are supposed to solve problems.

When you read the numbers, 70, 80 percent of Americans approve of the Dream Act, even an overwhelming majority of those who voted for President Trump believe these young people deserve a chance to be legal in America. Why can't we get our job done? We need to do it and do it now. We have 3 weeks before we are likely to end the session this year. I want to see us get this finished this year. I want to see a bipartisan agreement.

I came to the floor earlier and listened to the speeches of many of my colleagues—one from North Carolina and another from Oklahoma, one from the State of Texas and another from the State of Arkansas—and each one of them said there are lots of things we need to do to fix our immigration system. I couldn't agree more.

I was on the task force—the Gang of 8 they called it—that came up with a comprehensive immigration reform. It

took us months to do it, but we did it. We did everything we could think of within the four corners of immigration reform. We passed it on the floor of the Senate with a strong bipartisan roll-call, and the House of Representatives refused to even consider it. That doesn't mean the problems have gone away. They are still here. What I am saying to my colleagues is, don't try to fix every immigration problem you can think of on the backs of these Dreamers like Blanca Morales. I am willing to talk to you honestly, forthrightly about border security. Count me in. I voted for it as part of comprehensive immigration reform, but every notion, every idea, every theory you have about immigration shouldn't be placed on the shoulders and backs of these young people.

Let's fix this, and then let's go on to the next phase of dealing with immigration reform in its totality. That makes sense to me. I am ready to bargain, work, compromise in good faith with any Member on the Republican side and the Democratic side who wants to make sure a young woman like this deserves a fighting chance in America. I believe that. I think most Americans believe it too. Now let's roll up our sleeves and go to work. There are plenty of things we can do the remainder of this year that will make a big difference in her life and in the future of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from California.

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. President, I would like to thank the senior Senator from Illinois. Senator DURBIN has been a longstanding leader in this Chamber and in our country on this issue, and I can't thank him enough for all he does so tirelessly. I see his work behind closed doors, and I know his passion and personal commitment to this issue. I thank the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. President, on February 16 of this year, which was 292 days ago, I offered my maiden speech as a new Member of the U.S. Senate. The subject of the speech was immigration—in particular, an emphasis on DACA and the Dreamers. Here we are 292 days later, and we have failed to move forward in any substantial or substantive way in bringing relief to these Dreamers who have qualified for DACA status. So we stand here, these 292 days later, talking about an issue that we must ultimately, and before the end of this year, resolve.

Let's also be clear that 3 months ago today, on September 5 of this year, the administration arbitrarily, recklessly, and cruelly ended DACA—the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program. DACA allowed young immigrants who were brought here by their parents to live and work in this country without fear that they would be deported. Later this week, on Friday, December 8, funding for the government runs out. I have been clear, along with my friend from Illinois and several

other colleagues, that any bill that funds the government must also include a fix for DACA.

I want to talk with you about why I believe it is important that we resolve this issue. I do believe there is a lot of misinformation out there. I think it is important that we as policymakers, as leaders in our country, craft and create public policy based on facts, not on misinformation and certainly not fear.

Let's begin by being very clear. The decision to rescind DACA is part of a much broader and troubling attempt to remake the demographics of the country by cracking down on immigrants. We have an administration that has ignited anti-immigrant sentiment, characterizing immigrants as rapists and murderers and people who are going to steal your jobs. We have an administration that has implemented an aggressive anti-immigrant agenda. This administration has called for a border wall that could cost up to \$70 billion. They have implemented Muslim bans which severely restrict immigration from six Muslim-majority countries. They have requested 10,000 new ICE agents and 5,000 new Border Patrol agents when they have not given the resources to be able to fill all the vacant positions they now have. They have ended the protected immigration status, known as TPS, for Haitians and Nicaraguans who fled disasters and may crack down on the protective status on Salvadorans as well. They are seeking to lower the refugee cap from 110,000 to 45,000 at a time when we have seen an increase in the worldwide number of refugees who are in crisis. This is the lowest number ever in the history of this country—actually, since 1980. Gen. John Kelly, the President's Chief of Staff and former Homeland Security Secretary, said that he wishes the number of refugees we would admit into our country were between zero and one.

I want to be clear. I have an incredible amount of respect for the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security, who each day leave their homes, committed to doing the work of keeping our homeland secure. It is noble and important work, and their mission is critical. I believe the vast majority of those frontline agents are doing their jobs honorably and effectively, but it is troubling when the White House has encouraged frontline agents to "take the shackles off." In fact, the Acting ICE Director has said:

If you're an immigrant in this country illegally . . . you should be uncomfortable. You should look over your shoulder.

When you look at these independent acts, there is a clear constellation that has formed. This enforcement surge is a barely disguised purge. This is not leadership. Leaders should not be in the business of inciting fear and sowing hate and division. Instead, leaders should be about creating smart public policy based on facts. So here are some of the facts.

It is a fact that there are 700,000 DACA recipients, 200,000 of whom are in California alone.

It is a fact that the Dreamers have been extensively vetted before they have qualified for DACA. They have gone through a process. They have turned over copious amounts of paperwork with incredible detail. They have gone through background checks. They have given personal information about the circumstances of their arrivals. They have answered questions that seek to figure out whether they have committed crimes. If they applied and they received DACA status, we determined that they were not threats in that regard to our public safety. We asked questions that sought to figure out if they have graduated high school. Are they living lawful and productive lives? It is only when they cleared that extensive vetting that they qualified for DACA status and received DACA status.

Let's be clear. These Dreamers who receive DACA status study in our colleges, serve in our military, and work in Fortune 100 companies. They are contributing to our economy in a way that we all are benefiting. If DACA recipients were to be deported, it is estimated that California would lose \$11 billion a year. The U.S. economy as a whole would lose an estimated \$460 billion over a decade.

It is also a fact that these young people have stood in classrooms and stood in line in many places and have placed their hands over their hearts, pledging allegiance to the flag of the United States—a flag that many of us wear on our lapels, a flag that represents the best of what we are in terms of the ideals upon which we were founded. We must be true to those ideals and consistent in the way that we approach so many issues as applied to this issue about what we do with these DACA kids. We must keep our word and our promise to them and guarantee what we promised, which is that we would not share their personal information with ICE and that they would not be deported if they continued to follow the rules.

In my experience, it is also true that many who have opinions or who have expressed opinions or who have the opportunity to make decisions about this issue have never met a Dreamer. We cannot fault them, but what we can ask is that those who have the power to make a decision on this issue make it their business and make an effort to really understand who we are talking about. Senator DURBIN talked about it, and Senator CARPER talked about it. My colleagues will be talking about who these Dreamers are, who these young people are.

I have to say that I have been a bit troubled when I have had this conversation. I remember when I had a conversation many months ago with the then-nominee to head up the Department of Homeland Security, Gen. John Kelly. I asked him if he had ever

met a Dreamer, and he said that he had not. When I asked him if I could arrange a meeting, he then went on to say: How about if I could take a meeting, instead, with their representatives? That is disheartening.

Before our colleagues make a decision about where they stand on this policy, I believe that it is only fair—it is only the right thing to do—that they make an effort to sit down and talk with Dreamers and get to understand who they are, the circumstances of their arrivals, and how they are contributing to our country.

There are going to be hundreds of Dreamers here tomorrow on Capitol Hill. I want to thank them for their leadership and their tireless advocacy because their stories will change hearts and minds. Let me just speak of a few. My colleagues have shared some; I will share some others.

I met Yurianna Aguilar, whom I took to the President's joint session address this February. Her parents brought her here from Mexico when she was just 5 years old. She grew up in Fresno, CA. She attended public schools, and she attended UC Merced. She was the first DACA recipient to earn a Ph.D. and now is a biomedical researcher in Chicago who is focused on the human heart. She is doing everything that she can to improve the condition and the lives of the people in our country because of the work she has done and the research she has done.

I met Eric Yang, who came from South Korea. He grew up in Irvine, CA, and is now studying business economics at UC Irvine, where he works to help other students.

My husband and I recently attended a play in Los Angeles. It is a great program at which there is free entertainment in the community park, and families show up and have a wonderful evening outdoors with each other in fellowship. I met a young woman who came up to me. She was with a group of friends.

Her friends said: Tell her. Tell her.

I looked at this young woman. She looked as if she was about maybe 19 years old.

I said: Tell me what? Tell me what is going on.

She looked at me, and she spoke so quietly that I didn't hear what she had said, so I asked her to repeat herself. She looked at me, and she started crying.

She said: I am DACA.

She was trembling as she cried, absolutely in fear of what her future may hold.

I suggest that before we take a position on this issue, we take a moment, each one of us as colleagues and each one of us as individuals, to see these young people, to truly see them—to see them not through a lens that is about partisanship or politics, not through a lens that is ideological, but based on who they really are and the practical realities of the lives they lived that brought them to this country, the cir-

cumstances that brought them to this country, and the lives they are living every day now.

These are incredible young people who are doing everything that we hope and pray will epitomize the American dream—work hard, be respectful, play by the rules, contribute to your community, have dreams and aspirations about how you can be productive. That is who these young people are.

Let's reject the fearmongering. Let's also understand that this is an imminent issue and that this is something we must address immediately. Let's agree that each day in the lives of these young people is a very long time. Each day that they go to sleep at night and are worried about a knock on the door at midnight that might tear them away from their families is a very long time. Let's not wait. Let's not wait to help them.

Let's reject those folks who say that there is no crisis, the folks who say that this is not an emergency. Let's understand that for these 700,000 Dreamers who cannot concentrate at school or at work and who are terrified of that midnight knock, this is an emergency. Let's think about the classmates and the coworkers and our neighbors and family members who have these children who are terrified that this protected status will be stripped and taken away. For them, this is an emergency.

Let's think about the 122 Dreamers who are losing their DACA status every single day, 851 of them every week, over 11,000 of them since September. Let's agree that this is a crisis, that this is an emergency. It has been 91 days since this administration ended DACA, and we cannot wait a single day longer.

Let's reject the fearmongering. Let's find a bipartisan consensus to act in the way that we know we should and can. Let's put the Dream Act to a vote today. I believe it could pass and would pass if everyone looked in their hearts and looked at the facts.

Today, 35 House Republicans signed a letter, writing that they want a DACA fix before the end of the year. It included Members from California and Texas and Florida and Utah and Pennsylvania and New York. Earlier today, my colleague, the junior Senator from Arizona, said:

We don't need to make a statement. We need to make a law.

I could not agree more. Let's give these Dreamers a future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the Presiding Officer for presiding today.

I thank the Senator from Illinois, DICK DURBIN, for organizing all of us this afternoon to speak on behalf of these Dreamers. His leadership has been critical in this fight for the dignity and recognition of hundreds of thousands of wonderful young people

who know no other home than the United States of America.

For 5 years, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—or DACA—Program, has created security and opportunity for young immigrants around the country, but now the futures of some 800,000 young people—7,900 of them in Massachusetts—are needlessly in jeopardy because President Trump has coldheartedly repealed DACA.

DACA has been a hugely successful program. It has provided so many young immigrants safety, security, dignity, respect, and opportunity. These are young people who study, who work, who live next-door to us every single day. They are our friends, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

I would like to speak for a few minutes about one of these DACA beneficiaries. She is 28-year-old Paola Sanchez, who came to the United States from Bolivia when she was 14 years old. Paola's father passed away when she was just 8 years old. Her mother was in a wheelchair and was unable to work. With her family facing hardship, Paola came to America to live with an aunt and uncle in New York. There, Paola worked in the manufacturing industry while she attended high school full time. She often got home late at night and grabbed a few hours of sleep before getting up to head to school to do it all over again.

In 2007, Paola graduated from high school and moved to my State of Massachusetts, where she has lived ever since. She now works 30 hours a week as a case manager while attending Bay State Community College full time. She has been a model student, earning a 3.9 grade point average, and she hopes to enter nursing school in January.

Paola has been a DACA recipient since 2013, but her current status expires next year. This means that unless Congress acts and saves the program, Paola and thousands like her will have to leave the United States for countries they do not really know and no longer consider to be home.

Paola's case, like many others, is even more difficult because she has a 4-year-old son—a child who is an American citizen by birth and has never known any other home than the United States.

All Paola wants is to stay here with her son, get her nursing degree, get a good job, and give back to the country so much more than she has been given. Instead, Paola and countless other young people and families across the United States face uncertain futures. Instead of going to sleep tonight knowing they will be able to live their lives in peace and plan for the future, they are left with uncertainty, vulnerable to deportation, and unable to work legally. This is a human tragedy in the making. It is heartbreaking, it is unjust, and it is just plain wrong. We should not punish these young people who have no other home than the United States of America. We should not go back on the word we gave when

we told these young people to come out of the shadows.

These Dreamers are engineers, police officers, teachers, future nurses, and students, many in our great Massachusetts colleges and universities. They serve bravely in our military. They are our best and brightest and are making the most of the opportunities that the United States has always provided to immigrant communities.

The ball is in the court of the Republican leadership in the House and Senate. Speaker PAUL RYAN and Leader MITCH MCCONNELL can listen to a growing chorus of their own colleagues and to business CEOs, including those at Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, General Motors, and to academic leaders, countless college and university presidents, all of whom support DACA—or they can side with the forces of intolerance and injustice.

Congress should pass the Dream Act so that people, like Paola, who were brought here at a young age and who have served in the military or pursued higher education can earn citizenship.

I urge everyone to listen to DICK DURBIN, to listen to this chorus of voices from around our country. Protect these 800,000 young people. Protect them because they deserve it, and America will be the beneficiary of these great Americans who are serving our country right now.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Thank you very much, Mr. President, and I thank my colleague from Massachusetts for his eloquent words just now. I also thank Senator DURBIN for his leadership on this critically important issue.

As many of my colleagues have stated, we must protect Dreamers and allow them to continue to be vital members of communities in New Hampshire and across the Nation. The energy, hard work, and innovation of Dreamers are critical components of our economic future. These are hard-working young people who have so much to offer and who deserve our support and our urgent action.

They are people like a young man from the Seacoast area of New Hampshire, who recently met with my staff. This young person was brought to the United States when he was in elementary school. His parents emigrated from Indonesia, joining members of the New Hampshire community who had left their country because they were fleeing religious persecution. For years, members of this community have worked, paid taxes, and raised their families on the Seacoast. Now the Trump administration is engaging in misguided efforts to prioritize their deportation—efforts that I urge this administration to stop immediately.

The Dreamer I am talking about this afternoon had never known that he was undocumented until he wanted to get

his driver's license. But he said his life was changed after President Obama unveiled the DACA Program. This young man was able to get a job, attend community college, and eventually enroll at the University of New Hampshire, where he is working toward his degree. His story makes clear why there is so much at stake and why it is critical that our colleagues work together in order to support these young people.

Granite Staters, like all Americans, recognize the value of hard work, the importance of unleashing the talent and energy of each and every individual, and they demand and expect that their elected leaders act with fairness and with common sense, which is all that the Dream Act represents.

We must pass the bipartisan Dream Act now and protect those who have so much to offer to the future of our great country.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Thank you, Mr. President.

I have been sitting on the floor for a while, listening to other Senators tell amazing stories about young people who came to this country as children and how they have thrived, how they have become woven into a part of the American fabric. These are stories of courage, stories of hope, and it is inspiring to listen to these stories.

Tonight I want to add another piece to this story, and that is about why law matters—why it matters that we have a Dream Act. This photo portrays Reina Guevara. She is a Massachusetts resident. She is a student now at UMass Boston. When Reina was 11 years old, she fled from El Salvador and settled with her mother in Everett, MA.

Reina is a model student. After completing high school and graduating with high honors from Bunker Hill Community College, she won a scholarship and transferred to UMass Boston, where she currently has a double major in philosophy and in public policy.

Until DACA came along, Reina had to live in the shadows, and living in the shadows wasn't easy. She worked long hours in a restaurant where she was subjected to sexual harassment. Knowing that she didn't have legal status, Reina's boss frequently propositioned her to have a sexual relationship with him and threatened to report her to immigration authorities if she didn't go along with what he wanted. So instead of giving in to her boss's advances, Reina quit her job, even though her boss refused to pay her for the work that she had already completed.

DACA changed the world for Reina. It meant protection. It meant that she could go to work without the fear of being sent back to a country that she barely knew. It meant that she had access to more jobs, where she wouldn't have to face exploitation, humiliation, and sexual harassment. It meant that

Reina could pay in-state tuition and become the first person in her family to complete college, opening up even more doors of opportunity.

Right now we are in the middle of a long overdue discussion about sexual harassment and sexual assault. Women are bravely coming forward to tell their stories about powerful men who have abused their power to hurt others. Sexual assault isn't just happening in Silicon Valley or in Hollywood or in legislative chambers. It happens all across America at hotels, fast food restaurants, and convenience stores. If you are a woman without official status, you have yet another barrier to speaking out.

When the DACA Program started, we made a promise to young people like Reina. We promised them that if they came out of the shadows, they would have an opportunity to live and to work and to go to school without the fear of deportation. We promised to protect them. Donald Trump broke that promise when he ended DACA.

But there is something that Congress can do to help Reina and people like her, young kids who have spent their lives reaching for their dreams. We can pass a clean Dream Act, a bipartisan bill that would give young people like Reina status and a path to citizenship, a bill that protects those young people without subjecting their parents or their siblings to deportation. We could do that, but time is running out.

Soon DACA recipients will begin losing their status and will be subjected to deportation. We can stop that from happening, but we have to act soon. I am ready to vote and many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are ready to vote. So I have one question for MITCH MCCONNELL: What is stopping you?

We are ready to pass this bill. Just get it done.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I am rising to engage in the conversation about getting the Dream Act passed. I thank my good friend and colleague from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, for his passion and for his unrelenting commitment to protecting our American Dreamers. He has been on this floor day after day, month after month, advocating that we have to address this situation in which individuals came to the United States as small children; they have grown up here, they speak English, and they have been totally immersed in making our community stronger, our States stronger, our Nation stronger. We need to make sure

that we treat them fairly, with respect, and that we ensure that we are able to benefit from their presence here, just as they benefit from being here in the United States. There are 800,000 Dreamers across our country. I know they all very much appreciate his leadership.

The young men and women who came out of the shadows to be part of the DACA Program—Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—were made a promise that they would be all right if they did so; that their information would not be used then to deport them. So they took a gamble that the United States would stand by the commitment it was making to them, and now they are wondering what happened because their futures are dangling by a thread. The program has been abandoned by the President, and if it is not replaced by legislation done right here in this room, they basically will be subject to being deported to places where they don't speak the language, they don't understand the culture—they are unfamiliar with it—and they don't have any network. They are really kind of stateless individuals who are in a very tough condition.

One person like this from Salem, OR, is Diana Banda Palacios. In 1993, Diana, who is shown here in this picture I have in the Chamber, came to this country from Mexico as a 3-year-old toddler. She has lived her entire life since then, here in America.

Growing up in America, Diana dreamed of becoming a first responder, so much so that during her high school years, she volunteered for Red Cross and for her community emergency response team, but that dream was thrown into doubt during her senior year when she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. She has fought that cancer, and she has beat that cancer. She graduated from high school more determined than ever to pursue her vision of how she could contribute to the community, and she has contributed. She enrolled and put herself through the firefighting and paramedic program at her local community college, and now she has made a career for herself as an emergency medical technician, an EMT. Every day, she is working literally to save lives, and we are threatening to kick her out of the country—the only country she has ever known.

Diana said a few years back when the DACA Program was first being discussed:

America is my home. This is the place I love, where everyone and everything I know

is. I know nothing outside the United States. Whatever punishment I must pay I am willing to do. All I ask is for a chance. Better yet I beg for a chance to prove that I am not a criminal, that I have much to offer this beautiful place.

That is, in her words, her vision, her desire to be able to fully participate in our society.

Just recently, over Thanksgiving, I led a delegation to Burma. Burma has had horrific circumstances occur because they have a population of Muslims called the Rohingya, and the Rohingya have been in Burma for generations. Many of them came 200 years ago, and they came because they were imported for labor. They have farmed the rice paddies, they have fished in their boats off the coast, but they have never really been accepted by Burma. Burma recognized in their 1982 law 135 minorities, but they didn't recognize the Rohingya because the adjacent Rakhine minority is in kind of a hostile relationship with them. They have always been treated as second-class citizens, so much so that in the middle of Rakhine State, there are about 120,000 people living in camps. They are not allowed to leave the camps. They are not allowed to fully participate in society. They are not given citizenship rights. In northern Rakhine State, in that area, the military went in and burned some 300 villages, engaged in systematic rape, proceeded to shoot people as they fled their villages, and now 600,000 people have gone into Bangladesh.

The reason I raise this is not a parallel situation, but there is, at its core, a similar issue, and that issue is whether a nation thrives by entertaining the situation of having a stateless population. Burma had a stateless population that it did not recognize, did not allow to be fully engaged. They weren't even second-class citizens because they weren't allowed citizenship.

Well, we have now a tremendous population of young folks who have grown up in America. They are culturally American. Many of them had no idea they were born abroad, and they are ready to be full participants if we will let them. Won't we be so much better off to enable them to rise to their full potential, to make their full contribution, to have a full measure of participation in our society?

We have Diana's story, but multiply that times 800,000 people. What a fantastic reservoir of talent, ability, energy, and passion waiting to be fully contributed to being part of the United States of America.

While we delay, these 800,000 young members of our communities are in limbo. They are waiting for us to act. They know they took a gamble by joining the DACA Program, and they now know the Federal Government has all of their information to track them down and deport them. Wouldn't that violate completely the spirit under which we established the DACA Program to begin with? Let's get this DREAM Act done.

Earlier today, I was here on the floor, listening to a conversation from some of my colleagues, and they were saying: Well, let's get it done by March. I would say to my colleagues across the aisle: Let's not wait until March. Let's not wait until February. Let's not wait until January. Let's engage in this conversation now. Let's get it done by the end of the year. These young folks have waited a long time. They have waited too long. So let's address it, and let's maintain in our hearts the spirit that has animated our Nation.

All of us, unless we are 100 percent Native Americans, either came from foreign lands or our parents or our parents' parents, our forefathers and foremothers came from other lands. We know what that is like. It was difficult many times, but our families found their place. Let's enable these young folks, these Dreamers to find their place. It will be far better for them and far, far better for us.

Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:26 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 6, 2017, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 5, 2017:

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

EMILY WEBSTER MURPHY, OF MISSOURI, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF GENERAL SERVICES.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

KIRSTJEN NIELSEN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION

GLEN R. SMITH, OF IOWA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION BOARD, FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION, FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 21, 2022.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

MICHEL DOHERTY

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Michel Doherty as she nears her 93rd Birthday.

Michel has lived in Cape Coral for more than three decades and has been a role model for many. From her philanthropic endeavors to her volunteerism, she has influenced the minds of those destined to make a difference, while making an everlasting impact on her own.

Michel was previously named Lee County Citizen of the Year and received The News-Press 2014 People of the Year Luminary Award. Beyond her honors and achievements, Michel has a heart of gold. I thank Michel for her years of service.

COMMEMORATING THE 10TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF CAIR-MINNESOTA

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a decade of groundbreaking work by the Council on American-Islamic Relations—Minnesota Chapter (CAIR-MN). Ten years ago, CAIR-MN was founded to protect the civil liberties of all Americans, regardless of religious background. Their tireless work represents our core American values: freedom, justice, and equality for all.

During this challenging year of record increases in hate crimes and attacks against Muslims, CAIR-MN has led the fight to strengthen our community. CAIR-MN spearheaded protests against the Muslim Ban and provided community information to those affected by discriminatory policies. It has also successfully defended the rights of refugees and newcomers in the Twin Cities and beyond. CAIR-MN has educated more than 100,000 Minnesotans and has been instrumental in engaging our community in dialogue. They've also worked tirelessly to legally represent over 2,500 Minnesotans facing discrimination. From working with local journalists to ensure accurate representation of Muslims, to supporting interfaith relationships in our community, CAIR-MN has been at the frontline of our fight to achieve our common goal of inclusion.

It is an honor to represent community members like those who are a part of CAIR-MN and benefit from their advocacy. Please join me in recognizing a decade of their efforts to create a Minnesota where all are welcome and justice is upheld.

CONGRATULATING THE MARIST
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS
VOLLEYBALL TEAM ON THEIR
STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Marist High School RedHawks girls volleyball team for winning the 2017 Illinois girls high school volleyball championship. Marist is an exceptional Catholic prep school on the South Side of Chicago.

Marist's state championship win at Redbird Arena in Normal, Illinois is the crowning achievement after an incredible 41–1 season. The Marist girls volleyball team proved their ability to perform at the highest level in the Class 4A division, beating out Minooka High School to win the state championship. This win marks the first time that Marist has won the girls state volleyball championship since the team was established in 2002.

The championship match was a thriller. Marist was tied with Minooka at one set apiece going into the third and final set. Marist quickly went down 8–4 but mounted a strong comeback. An 18–4 rally gave Marist a 25–15 victory in the final set to close out the match.

I commend the work of head coach Jordan Vidovic who led his team on a long winning streak after their only loss in September. Since that loss the team members have worked hard to perform as a cohesive unit and push each other to greatness. The leadership of the team's nine seniors played no small role in bringing the season to a fantastic end. The members of this team are well positioned for further success in their athletic careers and some will surely have outstanding playing careers in college.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the girls volleyball team at Marist High School and I extend my wishes for their continued success.

HONORING HAZIM HARDEMAN

HON. DWIGHT EVANS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an inspirational man from North Philadelphia, Hazim Hardeman, a winner of the prestigious Rhodes scholarship.

Hardeman, 23, was born in North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and grew up blocks away from Temple University. In 2015, Hardeman graduated with High Honors from the Community College of Philadelphia with a degree in Communications. During his time at the Community College of Philadelphia, he served as a vice president of the Student Government Association. After his time at the Community

College of Philadelphia, he transferred to Temple University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in Strategic Communications and Public Advocacy and graduated magna cum laude in 2017. In addition to his many achievements he has written on the prison abolition movement, gun-violence, and hip-hop music and is a substitute teacher in the School District of Philadelphia.

Prestigiously, Hardeman is the first Community College of Philadelphia and Temple University graduate to become a Rhodes Scholar. The Rhodes scholarship is one of the oldest and most distinguished international scholarships in the world. Hardeman was chosen not only for his outstanding scholarly achievements, but for his character, commitment to others and to the common good. Next fall, Hardeman will enroll at Oxford University in England. While there, he will pursue his master's degree in sociology or political theory.

Hardeman has faithfully devoted his academic career and life toward advocating and supporting his community. The 2nd Congressional District of Pennsylvania is so proud of his wonderful accomplishments and extends gratitude to Hazim Hardeman for his dedicated support to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

13TH ANNUAL NORTHWEST INDI-
ANA INNOVATION INDUCTION
CEREMONY

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I congratulate Ivy Tech Community College and its regional partners who recently celebrated their 13th Annual Northwest Indiana Innovation Induction Ceremony. At the ceremony, which reflects the "Spirit of Innovation" in Indiana, nineteen individuals and twenty-one teams were inducted as members of the 2017–2018 Class of the Society of Innovators of Northwest Indiana. Of these individuals, several members were inducted as Society Fellows for their exceptional efforts in innovation. These individuals are Dr. Teresa A. Eineman, Norman-David P. Fischer, Chris Mahlmann, and Michael E. Schrage. Also honored were the recipients of the Leonardo da Vinci Accelerating Greatness Award for Team Innovation, which include the Plate Accelerating Cooling Technology Team, a project of ArcelorMittal Global R&D, East Chicago, and its partners in France, along with Burns Harbor Plate, and the Arconic Power and Propulsion La Porte Engineering Team. The Hammond Group Incorporated was honored with the Chanute Prize for Team Innovation. In addition, Chenn Q. Zhou, Ph.D. was named the 2017–2018 Gerald I. Lamkin Fellow for Innovation and Service. For their truly remarkable contributions to the community of Northwest Indiana

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

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

and their unwavering commitment to cultivate a culture of innovation, these honorees were inducted at Horseshoe Casino, Hammond, on October 26, 2017.

The Society of Innovators of Northwest Indiana was created by Ivy Tech with the goal of highlighting and encouraging innovative individuals and groups within the not-for-profit, public, and private sectors, as well as building a culture of innovation in Northwest Indiana. The Lake County Campus is led by Chancellor R. Louie Gonzalez, Ivy Tech Community College. The importance of innovation in Northwest Indiana, as well as globally, is crucial in today's ever-changing economy.

The fellows selected by the Society of Innovators were chosen for their innovative leadership throughout Northwest Indiana and beyond. Dr. Teresa A. Eineman, Superintendent, Crown Point Community School Corporation, implemented a continuous improvement model that applies proven business practices to education and has led to the overwhelming success of the high performing school district. Norman-David P. Fischer, Chief Engineer, The Fischer Group, invented an energy efficient compressed air desiccant dryer, a unique design that creates energy savings without using plant air for the drying process. The invention has been used at ArcelorMittal, providing over seven million kilowatts of energy savings annually. Chris Mahlmann is the founder of Ideas in Motion Media, which is an on line "good news" company that covers Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. Today, the company produces four editions and serves approximately 65,000 readers. Michael Schrage, Chairman, President, and CEO of Centier Bank in Merrillville, transformed a small family bank into the largest bank of deposit in Northwest Indiana; as well as Indiana's largest private bank.

The Leonardo da Vinci Accelerating Greatness Award for Team Innovation was presented to the ArcelorMittal Global R&D Center, East Chicago, and its partners in France, along with Burns Harbor Plate, for creating a unique accelerating cooling technology called ACCtec, which greatly improves steel plate production and will make ArcelorMittal more competitive globally. The award was also presented to the Arconic Power and Propulsion La Porte Engineering Team. This group pioneered the manufacturing process for a newly invented single-piece casting for Pratt & Whitney's next generation Pure Power® Geared Turbofan™ jet engine. The casting is nicknamed the "cornerstone" because its implementation laid the foundation for a \$100 million plant expansion. The expansion has captured growing demand for advanced jet engine components and created more than 300 advanced manufacturing jobs since 2015.

The Chanute Prize for Team Innovation was presented to The Hammond Group, Incorporated (HGI). In 2015, HGI completed its cutting-edge Lead Acid Battery Laboratory, which was created to improve battery performance in order to successfully meet the demands from automobile manufacturers and renewable energy markets.

Chenn Q. Zhou, Ph.D. is the recipient of the 2017 Gerald I. Lamkin Fellow for Innovation and Service Award. Dr. Zhou is the founding director of the Steel Manufacturing Simulation and Visualization Consortium established at Purdue University Northwest. She has helped to successfully advance the steel industry by

focusing on new and innovative technologies, including simulation and visualization.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending these noteworthy, inspiring innovators. The contributions each has made to society here in Northwest Indiana and worldwide are immeasurable and lifelong. For their truly brilliant innovative ideas, projects, and leadership, these recipients are worthy of the highest commendation.

PROCLAMATION FOR THE LYNCH-GAITER FAMILY REUNION

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following proclamation for the Lynch-Gaiter family reunion:

Whereas, in the mid 1800's in Sylacauga, Alabama, the legacy of the Lynch-Gaiter families began with the story of a Cherokee Indian slave girl who began this family and today her descendants have blessed and shaped our nation; and

Whereas, the Lynch-Gaiter families have produced many well respected citizens, patriachs and matriarchs who have made contributions to our nation. Some of the noted members of the Lynch-Gaiter families are, Cleveland Gaiter (Tuskegee Airman/Decorated War Hero), Felix Gaiter, Sr. (Community leader in Knoxville, TN), Henry Garner (Union President/LGFR in Pittsburgh, PA), Bobby Clayton, Sr. (Short Film Producer), Margaret Gaiter (Community Activist/College Community Board President) and J.W. Garner (Community Activist); and

Whereas, in our beloved Fourth Congressional District of Georgia, we are honored to have members of the Lynch-Gaiter families, especially Ms. Meredith Lilly, one of our most beloved citizens who resides in DeKalb County, Georgia; and

Whereas, family is one of the most honored and cherished institutions in the world, and as you celebrate your lineage, we take pride in knowing that families such as the Lynch-Gaiter families have set aside this time to fellowship with each other, to honor their heritage and to pass along history to each other by gathering from far and wide at this year's family reunion in Atlanta, Georgia; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to honor and recognize the Lynch-Gaiter families in our District; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim July 29, 2017 as Lynch-Gaiter Family Reunion Day in the 4th Congressional District.

Proclaimed, this 29th day of July, 2017.

RECOGNIZING THE LINCOLN STATION ON THE OPENING OF THEIR RENOVATED DEPOT

HON. DARIN LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to recognize the Lincoln Depot, in Lincoln,

Illinois, on the opening of their newly renovated Depot building this morning.

In the 1850's, Abraham Lincoln helped citizens and railroads establish a needed rail line through Logan County. Soon after, this town was christened, by its founders, in Lincoln's name, beautifully described by the Looking for Lincoln marker just outside the Depot. Constructed in 1911, the Lincoln Depot enhanced this critical railway stop, essential for commerce and the pioneers of the last century and a half who were looking to explore and develop to the west. With an estimated 450,000 people now traveling through Lincoln and central Illinois annually, the depot will continue to be a vital part of the Midwest travel experience.

Today, the depot is again restored as a beautiful landmark in downtown Lincoln that is crucial to the economy of this community, the students of both Lincoln College and Lincoln Christian University, and the residents of Logan County. Lincoln, and Central Illinois, rely on these very rail lines to connect them to communities and commercial markets throughout the Midwest and across America. The new Lincoln Depot modernizes the previous facility, ensuring improved safety and an enhanced travel experience, including improved on-time performance for Amtrak.

I extend my sincere congratulations to the Lincoln community on the newly renovated Lincoln Station Depot. This renovation will ensure the legacy of the depot and the railway, envisioned by Abraham Lincoln as a catalyst for the future growth of central Illinois, will carry on for generations to come.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. MURPHY

HON. GARRET GRAVES

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend a heartfelt thank you to Dr. Bruce Murphy for his service as president of Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana. Dr. Murphy has spent his career investing in higher education and has tirelessly served as Nicholls' fifth president over the last four years. Throughout his tenure, many universities across the country struggled to attract and retain students, but Nicholls' actually increased enrollment four consecutive semesters. I am most impressed by his efforts to prepare students at Nicholls University for successful integration into the real world that awaits upon graduation. The school's partnership with Fletcher Community College, for example, has resulted in significant progress in workforce development. Aside from his service as president of Nicholls State University, both President Murphy and his wife, Jeanne Murphy, are retired from the U.S. Army, having earned the rank of lieutenant colonel and colonel, respectively. Dr. and Mrs. Murphy generously served on our military academy review board. I am proud that they devoted time in their busy lives to play an active role in the recruitment of young Louisiana leaders to our nation's military service academies. I thank Dr. Murphy for his commitment to excellence at Nicholls, his service to the state of Louisiana, and his service to our nation. My sincerest

congratulations on an incredible career and time served as Nicholls' president.

10TH ANNUAL LAKESHORE CLASSIC BASKETBALL INVITATIONAL

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and respect that I recognize the Gary Chamber of Commerce as the organization celebrates the 10th Annual Lakeshore Classic basketball invitational. In observance of this special event, the Gary Chamber of Commerce hosted a celebratory corporate luncheon in Gary, Indiana, at the Diamond Center on Tuesday, November 21, 2017, followed by the basketball invitational at West Side Leadership Academy on Friday, November 24, 2017, and Saturday, November 25, 2017.

The theme for this year's Lakeshore Classic is "Region Proud." This theme acknowledges the important contributions of our local youth in illuminating the strength and virtues of Northwest Indiana. Northwest Indiana is a region that strives for excellence and overcomes obstacles. To enhance the "Region Proud" theme, the Gary Chamber of Commerce has chosen Mike Huff, former Chicago White Sox player and team representative, as a guest speaker for the corporate luncheon. Mr. Huff played for several teams and overcame various challenges throughout his outstanding professional baseball career. Today, Mike is Vice President—Baseball/Fastpitch, Outfield, Bunting and Baserunning Instructor at the Bulls/Sox Youth Academy, located in the Chicagoland area. The Bulls/Sox Youth Academy is a facility that provides instruction to youth athletes in the sports of basketball, baseball, and fastpitch softball. Mike is dedicated to improving their skills and building the self-esteem of each young athlete that comes through the door. For his truly genuine and outstanding support of these young athletes, Mr. Huff is worthy of our gratitude and respect.

At this time, I would like to recognize the schools participating in the Lakeshore Classic basketball tournament. These schools are dedicated to positively impacting Northwest Indiana through academic excellence and sportsmanship. The participating schools include West Side Leadership Academy, East Chicago Central High School, Thea Bowman Academy, Chicago Farragut Career Academy, Gary Theodore Roosevelt College and Career Academy, and Michigan City Marquette Catholic High School.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing the Gary Chamber of Commerce and the organizers and sponsors of the 10th Annual Lakeshore Classic. Their influence, passion, and dedication to our youth and to the community in Northwest Indiana are truly commendable.

RECOGNIZING SKANEATELES HIGH SCHOOL BOYS FOOTBALL TEAM

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the victory of the Skaneateles High School Boys Football team in the New York State Championship game on Friday, November 24th. The Skaneateles Lakers defeated Holy Trinity Pride by a score of 28–25 for its first football state championship in the school's history.

After ending the first half only up two points, the Lakers fought hard and worked as a team to score two more touchdowns in the second half of the game. Junior Patrick Hackler, who led his team to victory as captain and as the quarterback, received the championship game's Most Valuable Player Award.

The Lakers finished their season with a 12–1 record due to the hard work of seniors Jacob Nesbitt, John Ryan, Tyler Schneider, Hunter Woodruff, James Leubner, Hunter Dart, Jon Ricklefs, Jared Calapari, Haas Tehan, TJ Greenfield, Scott Ochsner, Cross Bianchi, and Tom Scherrer; juniors Craig Scherrer, Areh Boni, Patrick Hackler, Luke Viggiano, William McGlynn, John Danforth, Carter Blake, Will Frank, Jimmy Liberatore, Oliver Weir, Solomon Landsberg, Nathan Squires, Nathan Wellington, and Jack Carlike; sophomores Caden Custer, Nick Wamp, Avery Rodgers, and Billy Richards; and freshmen Alex Goethe, Jack Comer, Ken Byrne, Nathaniel Congel, Colin Cox, Ben Euto, James Falso, Jack Mannigan, Mason Michel, Christian Miles-Pizzoleo, Hunter Simmons, and Calen Van Holtz. The team was coached by Joe Sindoni, an exceptional leader with an accomplished football résumé.

Lakers played with dedication and respect throughout the entire season. This hard-earned championship is something these teammates will cherish for the rest of their lives. I commend the hard work, commitment, and teamwork displayed by these young men. Excellence on the field translates to excellence off the field and the practice of sacrificing for the common goal builds character in our children. I could not be more proud to congratulate these young men on their tremendous season.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Mr. Speaker, on November 28th and 29th, I am not recorded on four votes because I was absent due to illness.

Had I been present, I would have voted: Yes on Roll Call 638, the Fowler and Boskoff Peaks Designation Act; Yes on Roll Call 639, the Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017; Yes on Roll Call 640, ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 631; and Yes on Roll Call 641, the combined rule providing for consideration of the bill H.R. 3017 and H.R. 3905.

PROCLAMATION FOR PASTOR INELLA R. MATTOX

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following proclamation for Pastor Inella R. Mattox:

Whereas, our lives have been touched by the life of this one woman who has given of herself to her family, church, community, and nation; and

Whereas, Pastor Inella R. Mattox good works are present throughout the state of Georgia as an exemplary mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, great grandmother, aunt, neighbor, community worker, minister and friend; and

Whereas, this giant of a woman, who was reared up in Senoia, Georgia, moved to Atlanta, Georgia, when she was 17, was born on June 7, 1937, to the late Robert Lewis Rush and Bethenia Rush; and

Whereas, Pastor Inella Mattox was a virtuous woman, a woman of great integrity who remained true to the uplifting of her community and family which in turn uplifted others; and

Whereas, she was an exemplary matriarch, serving as compass and wise counselor and bringing great joy to her church New Creation, our district, her family and friends; and

Whereas, Pastor Mattox loved her family; encouraging all of those around her to make a difference, be it her children, her friends, her neighbors and her church members at the New Creation Church in Decatur, Georgia where she served as founder and pastor; and

Whereas, this remarkable woman gave of herself, never asking for fame or fortune as she became a quiet storm, a spark that starts a flame; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to bestow a Congressional Recognition on Pastor Inella R. Mattox for her leadership, friendship and service to all of the citizens of Georgia and the nation; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr., do hereby attest to the 115th Congress that Pastor Inella R. Mattox of Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia is deemed worthy and deserving of this "Congressional Recognition" Pastor Inella R. Mattox, U.S. Citizen of Distinction.

Proclaimed, this 1st day of June, 2017.

RECOGNIZING CHIEF RANDY DEANDA

HON. NORMA J. TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Randy DeAnda of the City of Rialto in my district on the occasion of his retirement from a lifetime of exemplary public service to the communities of the Inland Empire.

Chief DeAnda has been a police officer for 31 years, 25 of which have been with the City of Rialto. My district has benefitted greatly over the years from his qualified background in community safety. He received his Bachelor's degree in Workforce Education and Development, he is a graduate of both the Peace

Officer Standards and Training Executive Leadership Command College and the Police Executive Research Forum Senior Management Institute, and is a member of the California Police Chief's Association and the San Bernardino County Police Chief's Association.

Chief DeAnda's 31 years of service led him from the rank of corporal to Police Captain to now the current head of the Rialto Police Department. His career and expertise have allowed him to serve in various capacities including as a Field Training Officer, Gang Detective, Narcotics Investigator, Street Crime Attack Team Officer, Department SWAT team member, and Department Press Information Officer. Throughout his tenure, he was involved in several undercover narcotic sting operations and gang sweeps—all of which has helped our communities become a little safer. As a member of both the California Gang Investigators' Association and the California Narcotics Officers' Association, he is considered an expert in gangs and narcotics where he has worked and testified on a number of high profile cases involving career criminals.

In service to the Inland Empire, Chief DeAnda has provided leadership and supervision over the Area Command Program and its projects. To name a few, these projects include the City of Rialto's first gang injunction, the beautification of Citrus Grove housing complex and other multi-housing developments as well as community based organizations like the Neighborhood Watch and National Night Out.

For his extraordinary accomplishments, it is my honor to recognize Chief Randy DeAnda on the House floor today. His 25 years of commitment and contributions to the City of Rialto and the greater community of the Inland Empire are worthy of commending and admiration.

POSTHUMOUSLY HONORING DETECTIVE SEAN SUITER OF PENNSYLVANIA ON HIS SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND HIS CAREER IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I extend my sincere condolences to the family, peers and loved ones of my constituent, Detective Sean Suiter of the Baltimore City Police Department, who was killed in the Line of Duty on November 16, 2017. We are grateful for his many, dedicated years of service as a law enforcement officer and grieve his passing.

I've long appreciated the commitment of people who devote themselves selflessly to serving our Nation and communities. Detective Suiter served in the United States Army from 1992 to 1998, after which he began his 18-year service with the Baltimore City Police—where he ultimately earned promotion to the rank of Detective.

Detective Suiter's peers describe a conscientious and dedicated officer who "operated beyond his years." One colleague recalled a recent incident when a man who

Suiter criminally pursued in the past, approached Suiter to say that he was now employed, and thanked Suiter for always treating him with respect. Detective Suiter's neighbors in Conewago Township, York County, recall, ". . . a nice man who always stopped in to say hello."

Detective Suiter's tireless dedication, professionalism and sacrifice touched the lives of countless people. His legacy of service to our Nation and communities will endure, and his loss will be felt in significant and myriad ways.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I offer my heartfelt condolences to Detective Suiter's family, friends and colleagues on this tragic loss. I thank him and Godspeed, brother. He will remain in my heart and prayers.

PROCLAMATION FOR MS. EMILY JONES

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following proclamation for Ms. Emily Jones:

Whereas, in the Fourth Congressional District of Georgia, there are many individuals who are called to contribute to the needs of our community through leadership and service; and

Whereas, Ms. Emily Jones has answered that call by giving of herself as an educator at Dunaire Elementary, and as a beloved daughter, sister, mother and friend; and

Whereas, Ms. Jones has been chosen as the 2017 Teacher of the Year, representing Dunaire Elementary school; and

Whereas, this phenomenal woman has shared her time and talents for the betterment of our community and our nation through her tireless works, motivational speeches and words of wisdom; and

Whereas, Ms. Jones is a virtuous woman, a courageous woman and a fearless leader who has shared her vision, talents and passion to help ensure that our children receive an education that is relevant for today and necessary for a productive future, because she truly understands that our children are the future; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to honor and recognize Ms. Emily Jones for her leadership and service to our District and in recognition of this singular honor as 2017 Teacher of the Year at Dunaire Elementary School; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim May 22, 2017 as Ms. Emily Jones Day in the 4th Congressional District.

Proclaimed, this 22nd day of May, 2017.

IN HONOR OF THE USS "DALLAS" DECOMMISSIONING ON DECEMBER 5TH, 2017

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the USS *Dallas* (SSN-700) sub-

marine and the outstanding sailors who have served as her crew since her commissioning on July 18, 1981. On December 5th, 2017, this storied submarine will be decommissioned and leave the active United States Navy fleet.

The USS *Dallas* is the first vessel to be named after the City of Dallas, Texas. Her exceptional crew have served tirelessly to ensure that America remains the preeminent naval power on the globe. Before retirement, the USS *Dallas* was the second oldest active Los Angeles-class submarine, and over the course of her 36 years of service, the USS *Dallas* has been manned by over 250 officers and over 1,500 enlisted personnel.

The USS *Dallas*' keel was laid down on October 9th 1976, and finally launched in April of 1979. The USS *Dallas* was commissioned by the Navy in July of 1981, and in 1984 she took on a role in OPERATION ATTAIN DOCUMENT III, a naval freedom of navigation operation. After being upgraded during the Navy's first Depot Modernization Period, the USS *Dallas* operated in support of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm from August 1990 through January of 1991. In January of 1992, the USS *Dallas* and her crew received the "Golden Anchor" award of 1991 for excelling in all aspects of retention categories.

By the end of her first 10 years in service, the USS *Dallas* had completed one deployment to the Indian Ocean, two Mediterranean deployments, and one deployment to the North Atlantic. During this time she had received two Meritorious Unit Commendations, two Navy Unit Commendations, and was awarded the Battle Efficiency "E" for excellence in overall readiness of the command to carry out its wartime tasks. Shortly after completing a deployment in 2014, the USS *Dallas* earned its seventh Battle "E" award, with previous honors in 1986, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1999, and 2000.

In February of 1998, the USS *Dallas* became the first Los Angeles-class submarine to be fitted for a dry-deck shelter, allowing her to insert or extract special operations forces and their equipment. In 2000, the USS *Dallas* completed a Mediterranean deployment and supported the NATO submarine escape and rescue exercise program. During her last few deployments, the USS *Dallas* served in the Central Command area, which includes the Red Sea, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Arabian Sea, and she sailed over 30,000 nautical miles during numerous months at sea.

The boat and her crew, through their years of dedicated service, have lived up to the USS *Dallas*' motto, "First in Harm's Way," and I know that the crew of the USS *Dallas* will continue the hunt for excellence throughout their lives. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the USS *Dallas* and the incredible men and women who served as her crew. It is a privilege to commend them upon the conclusion of the USS *Dallas*' service. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in honoring the USS *Dallas* upon her decommissioning.

THE LEGACY OF CONGRESSMAN
JOHN CONYERS, JR.—DEAN OF
THE HOUSE

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I notified Speaker RYAN, Leader PELOSI and Governor Snyder of my retirement from the United States House of Representatives.

It has been a privilege and an honor to serve the citizens of Detroit, Michigan as their United States Congressman in the 13th and 14th Congressional District for more than 50 years.

I came to Congress in 1965. Since then, I have devoted my entire career to improving the lives of my constituents in Detroit and fighting for justice everywhere. These years witnessed a profound evolution in civil rights, led by millions in the streets who marched for justice, and people of conscience in the Congress—both Democrats and Republicans—who heard them and enacted the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act and other landmark reforms.

I have been at the forefront of the civil rights movement, I have been a champion of justice for the oppressed and the disenfranchised. I have never wavered in my commitment to justice and democracy. I am proud to have been part of that rich history.

I have been privileged to be a founder of the Congressional Black Caucus and to represent the United States Congress as Dean. I spearheaded and passed the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Act, the Violence Against Women Act, the Hate Crimes Act, the USA Freedom Act, and the extensions of the Voting Rights Act into law. I have led the fight against mandatory minimum sentences, hoping to reverse the devastating incarceration rates for African Americans and poor people, I have tried to pass a universal healthcare law (H.R. 676) every Congress since 1989. I have introduced H.R. 40 to study reparations for slavery, and I deeply appreciate those handful of courageous colleagues who have joined me.

For Detroiters, I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish by bringing hundreds of millions of dollars in critical grants and federal funding to Southeast Michigan to revitalize our great city, attract rich talent, and return us to prosperity.

I vehemently deny any and all allegations of harassment or dishonor, but I recognize that in this present environment, due process will not be afforded to me. I was taught by a great woman, my mother, to honor women. The first employee I ever hired was Mrs. Rosa Parks, who worked in my office for 22 years. It has been a great honor to work alongside some of the most talented and honorable staff on Capitol Hill and in Detroit, both women and men.

Given the totality of the circumstance of not being afforded the right to due process, in conjunction with my current health condition, and to preserve my legacy and good name, I am retiring.

I hope that my retirement will be viewed in the larger perspective of my record of service, and as I enter a new chapter, I pledge to continue my commitment to a progressive vision and a better future for this country that I love. I owe that to the legacy of my father, John

Conyers, Sr., who integrated labor unions in this country; to my brother Nathan, who integrated business and is my “main man” and to my loving wife Monica, my sons John III, whom I believe offers hope to this generation of leadership, and who is committed to being an advocate of fairness and justice for all, and Carl Edward who never leaves my side.

I cannot allow the great work of this body or the important work or the goals of the Democratic Party to be distracted. It has been the greatest honor and privilege of my life to represent the people of Michigan in the House of Representatives, but that responsibility will now fall to my colleagues and my successor. They have my deepest support and prayers. Jobs, Justice, Peace.

PROCLAMATION FOR MS. ETHEL
CRAIG

HON. HENRY C. “HANK” JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following proclamation for Ms. Ethel Craig:

Whereas, A virtuous woman of God accepted her calling to serve in the Educational System on September 17, 1973; and

Whereas, Ms. Ethel Craig began her educational career in teaching with the Atlanta Public School System as a Math Teacher, she also taught as a teacher for the intellectually gifted students and currently she serves as a School Psychologist. She has provided guidance to school personnel, parents and students in regards to counseling, assessments, instructional support, interventions and prevention services; and

Whereas, this phenomenal woman has shared her time and talents as a Teacher, Mother, Grandmother, Educator and Motivator, giving the citizens of Georgia a person of great worth, a fearless leader, a devoted scholar and a servant to all who want to advance the lives of our youth; and

Whereas, Ms. Craig is formally retiring from her educational career today after forty-three and a half years of service, she will continue to promote education because she is a cornerstone in our community that has enhanced the lives of thousands for the betterment of our District and Nation; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to honor and recognize Ms. Ethel Craig on her retirement from the Atlanta Public Schools System and to wish her well in her new endeavors; now therefore, I, HENRY C. “HANK” JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim May 30, 2017 as Ms. Ethel Craig Day in the 4th Congressional District of Georgia.

Proclaimed, this 22nd day of May, 2017.

RECOGNIZING MS. JACKIE
ZARATE-ROBERTS

HON. NORMA J. TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Jackie Zarate-Roberts on the occa-

sion of her retirement from a lifetime of civic service to the Latino community of the City of Los Angeles.

Ms. Zarate-Roberts began her journey in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, where she graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Administration in 1984. Her career in the City of Los Angeles started as a Junior Administrative Assistant in the Personnel Department's Examining Division. This was just the beginning, as she quickly rose through the ranks, eventually ending in the Selection Division. At one point, she was the Assistant Director of the Fire Commission's Equal Employment Opportunity Office, serving as a Sexual Harassment Counselor for employees of the LA Fire Department.

Concurrently, Ms. Zarate-Roberts actively engaged in efforts to assist the Latino community through her membership in the Los Angeles City Employees Chicano Association (LACECA), where her track record here is just as impressive. In her first year, she was quickly appointed to the Executive Board as Recording Secretary and over the years she has served as Executive Secretary, Treasurer, 1st and 2nd Vice President, and President several times—the first Latina to ever hold this position, I may add.

Her passion is portrayed through her active participation in voter registration drives, redistricting committees in support of Latino issues, scholarship fundraisers, among others. As a former 911 dispatcher, I saw firsthand the power of her commitment to the LACECA. She was instrumental in the return of bi-lingual pay to the City's 911 Operators along with improving training, working conditions, and increasing the number of bi-lingual operator positions serving the city. Much of this was accomplished by serving on Mayor Bradley's and Reardon's “Presidents Roundtable on Affirmative Action”, where she met monthly to advocate for the underrepresentation of minorities and women in the work force.

For all of the aforementioned Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to recognize a true community icon on the House floor today: Ms. Jackie Zarate-Roberts. Her unmatched commitment to the City of Los Angeles since 1984 and the innumerable contributions she has made to the greater Latino community will reverberate for generations to come and our community is better for because of it.

RECOGNIZING BYRD LOCHTIE AS
2017 NONPROFIT LEADER

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Byrd Lochtie of Humboldt County, who is honored by the Northern California Association of Nonprofits with the 2017 Nonprofit Leader Achievement Award, a recognition she richly deserves.

Byrd Lochtie has served as a nonprofit consultant, trainer, coach and mentor in Humboldt County since 1984. Shortly after earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in Chemistry from Cornell University in 1960, Byrd became involved with the Sierra Cascade Girl Scout Council where she served as a volunteer, volunteer leader, and trainer of leaders. She continues to volunteer with the Girl Scout Council

to this day. These decades of nonprofit volunteerism provided Byrd with valuable experience in youth leadership, team building, and developing effective educational and training programs. She has also furthered her nonprofit education through various training and courses over the years, and she earned a lifetime credential from California Community Colleges.

As an independent nonprofit consultant, Byrd Lochtie specializes in helping community leaders understand and be more effective in their roles, including working together to develop strategies to advance their missions. She has been a key partner and trainer for the Northern California Association of Nonprofits fostering learning, mentoring, relationship building, and excellence in leadership through monthly board leadership roundtables and introduction to board service workshops for many years.

Byrd remains highly engaged with a variety of local organizations, including the League of Women Voters of Humboldt County, Children's Authors Festival, the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission, United Way, Girl Scouts, Eureka City Schools Board of Trustees, the Eureka and Arcata Community Recycling Centers, and more.

Mr. Speaker, Byrd Lochtie's commitment to bettering her community through civic engagement and empowering leadership in others is commendable and worthy of recognition. I urge my colleagues to join me in extending our congratulations to her.

CONGRESSIONAL APP CHALLENGE

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening, I spoke via Skype with a number of young people in Pittsburgh who participated in the Congressional App Challenge in Pennsylvania's 14th Congressional District, which I have the honor to represent. I had the opportunity to commend all of them for participating in this year's App Challenge, and I announced the winning App in the 14th District competition.

The Congressional App Challenge is a competition held each year in many congressional districts throughout the country. The Congressional App Challenge provides an opportunity for students who create their own apps for mobile, tablet, or computer devices to compete with other students and receive feedback from leading experts in the field. It's a great way for Congress to get kids interested in computer programming and technology-related careers. That's good for them, and it's good for our economy, which will depend more and more on such skills in the coming years.

This is the first year I have had the pleasure of being involved with the Congressional App Challenge, and I hope there will be many more years to come. Events like this one serve to raise public awareness of the importance and value of quality STEM education programs.

I would like to recognize the 14th District's outstanding student coders for 2017. The team from Montour High School consisting of Macen Perkins, Shane O'Malley, Derek

Wassel, and Logan Hickey created an app that teaches students that coding languages are easy to understand and very fun with some time and practice. The team from Shadyside Academy consisting of Nick Zana, Fuad Youssef, Peter Wang, and Henry Friedlander created an app that executes all of the main functions of a planner, student ID, and document database. I am very proud of them all.

The winner of year's 14th Congressional District App Challenge was the team from Shadyside Academy. Their app will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol and shown on the U.S. House of Representatives web site. They will also be invited to the House of Representatives' Code Demo Day reception in Washington in the coming months. In addition, Carnegie Mellon University has offered to give the 14th District App Challenge winners a tour of its facilities. This is a great opportunity for these students to explore the campus and to learn just how far their interest in coding can take them.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the judges for this competition: Josh Lucas, co-founder of Work Hard Pittsburgh, Dr. Alexandros Labrinidis, professor at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Computing and Information, and Dr. Illah Nourbakhsh, professor at the Carnegie Mellon University's Robotics Institute and director of the CREATE Lab.

I would also like to thank the University of Pittsburgh for hosting tonight's event—and Carnegie Mellon University for hosting the winners for a tour of its facilities. These universities' support for the App Challenge speaks volumes about their commitment to education and the local community.

Finally, I want to commend all of the participants in this year's App Challenge. I hope that the recognition will, in some small way, demonstrate to these young coders how much we value their efforts and skill. It is my hope that the students who participated in this year's competition will carry their interest in coding with them throughout their lives. I also hope that this competition and others like it across the country will continue to grow and attract many other local promising coders.

PROCLAMATION FOR DR. KEITH E. BAIRD

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following proclamation for Dr. Keith E. Baird:

Whereas, our lives have been touched by the leadership and service of Dr. Keith E. Baird; and

Whereas, Dr. Keith E. Baird was born on January 20, 1923 in Barbados, West Indies, he came to the United States in 1947 and began his college studies at Columbia University studying Spanish, Romance Philology and Linguistics, where he earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees. He earned his doctoral degree in Sociolinguistics from the Union Graduate Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio; and

Whereas, Dr. Baird was an educator, author, advocate and administrator, he served

and led our nation in many different roles. As a founding member of the African American Teachers Association in the late sixties, he proved to be a key actor in the nascent community control movement in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York. As a steadfast pillar of our community, pioneered the teaching methods of 14 different languages in high schools and colleges. He was a community leader involved in the civic and educational direction of thousands in our nation. Along with his wife, Mrs. Mary A. Twining Baird, they educated us through the literary master piece "Sea Island Roots: The African Presence in the Carolinas and Georgia"; and Whereas, Dr. Baird was lauded as a "scholar's scholar and an educator's educator". He was a community builder who served my district without bounds. His influence, inspiration and motivation of many have helped to mold our district in becoming more inclusive. He has opened the minds and hearts of thousands; and

Whereas, he never asked for fame or fortune, nor found a job too small or too big; he gave of himself, his time, his talent and his life to uplift those in need by demonstrating unwavering commitment to educate, serve and goodwill; and

Whereas, he was a husband, a father, a brother and a friend; he was a man of great integrity who remained true to the uplifting of humanity on an international scale; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia recognizes Dr. Keith E. Baird as a citizen of great worth and so noted distinction; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby attest to the 115th Congress that Dr. Keith E. Baird is deemed worthy and deserving of this "Congressional Honor" by declaring Dr. Keith E. Baird, U.S. Citizen of Distinction in the 4th Congressional District of Georgia.

Proclaimed, this 12th day of August, 2017.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I unfortunately missed one vote during a vote series on November 30, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted: No on Roll Call No. 645, on the question of agreeing to the resolution (H. Res. 635), providing for consideration of H.R. 4182, the Ensuring a Qualified Civil Service Act of 2017; and H.R. 1699, the Preserving Access to Manufactured Housing Act of 2017.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for Roll Call votes 653 and 654 on Monday, December 4, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Nay on Roll Call vote 653 and Yea on Roll Call vote 654.

I believe that both the House and Senate GOP tax bills are an attack on the middle class and only serve to benefit the wealthiest in our nation. The GOP tax plan would raise taxes on millions of families and students, send jobs overseas, devastate our health care system, and overwhelm future generations with crushing debt. I stand with my Democratic colleagues in opposing this plan and urge the enactment of tax reform that puts working Americans first.

PROCLAMATION FOR THE GRACE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following proclamation for the Grace United Methodist Church:

Whereas, Grace United Methodist Church, founded on the 24 articles of religion or the basic statements of belief, continues to be a beacon of light to our district under the leadership and tutelage of Pastor George Lanier and the service of its members; and

Whereas, Grace United Methodist Church is celebrating Men's Day and the church's 150 year anniversary today, under the general rules of the Methodist Church, "Do no harm, Do good, Practice the ordinances of God"; and

Whereas, this remarkable and tenacious Church of God has empowered our community, spiritually fed its congregants through its ministries and outreach since 1867; and

Whereas, Grace United Methodist Church is celebrating Men's Day to make its ministry spiritually viable year round through constant and fervent prayer, sound thinking, spiritual insight and creative ideas to transform our community inside and outside these walls; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to honor and recognize Grace United Methodist Church for their leadership and service to our District on this the 150th Anniversary of their founding; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim June 11, 2017 as Grace United Methodist Church Day in the 4th Congressional District of Georgia.

Proclaimed, this 11th day of June, 2017.

HONORING DEAN TRUMP OF PENNSYLVANIA ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER MORE THAN 17 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE WARRINGTON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I extend my sincere congratulations to my constituent, Dean Trump, on his retirement after more than 17 years of service on the Board of Supervisors for Warrington Township, York County, Pennsylvania.

I've long appreciated the commitment of people who devote themselves to serving our

communities. Local elected officials have a direct impact on our residents by setting policy, enacting ordinances, adopting budgets and levying taxes. They're some of the hardest working and most dedicated public officials you'll find. Mr. Trump's commitment and hard work touched the lives of countless people. His legacy of service to our community is commendable.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I thank and congratulate Dean Trump on his service and wish him great happiness and success in his future adventures.

TRIBUTE TO RANDY JOHNSON

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Randy Johnson, a former committee staff member and long-time friend of the Education and the Workforce Committee who is stepping down as the Senior Vice President for Labor, Immigration, and Employee Benefits at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce after 20 years of service for that respected organization. As his title suggests, Randy's role at the Chamber has required him to be engaged in a number of key public policy issues involving the committee. Although the Chamber is losing a very effective advocate, the policies and laws impacting the American workforce are stronger because of his commitment and engagement.

Before going to the Chamber in 1997, Randy was the Labor Counsel and Workforce Policy Coordinator for the Committee for nine years. During this period, Randy was involved in crafting a number of federal statutes including the Family and Medical Leave Act on which Randy authored a superb minority report predicting many of the challenges that employers have faced in their efforts to comply with that law. He brought that same caliber of foresight and diligence to the legislative process leading up to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Randy also helped immensely during the transition to a Republican majority of the House after the 1994 elections and was instrumental in ensuring that the Committee hit the ground running during that historic period.

During his time at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Randy and his staff earned the respect of policymakers because they drilled down into the details of legislation and issues, an attribute which made them effective advocates and credible stakeholders on Capitol Hill. Randy could also be counted on to express with clarity what happens when the rubber meets the road.

The Chamber has always been a prominent voice for employers' interests in labor and workplace issues, but this does not mean the Chamber's positions are always strictly partisan. The Chamber's pragmatic positions on labor and employment issues reflected Randy's influence. Under Randy's leadership, there was always room for discussion whenever it was possible to reach a legislative solution in which all sides could come away with something. His relentless pursuit of results should be commended.

Mr. Speaker, we have not yet learned of Randy's plans after he departs the Chamber

but we expect and hope that we have not heard nor seen the last of him. We need more people like Randy Johnson who find that creating sound public policy is a calling and who possess his attention to detail and determination to seek solutions. We hope he is not content to let his light fade under a bushel and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

PROCLAMATION FOR GUS AND
WILLIE MAE DIXON DAY

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following Proclamation for Gus and Willie Mae Dixon:

Whereas, Gus and Willie Mae Dixon have maintained their vows to God and to each other for the past 50 years, during which time they have been blessed and fruitful with child and grandchildren, who are gathered with us as we celebrate their golden wedding anniversary; and

Whereas, since July 1, 1967 Gus and Willie Mae Dixon and family have contributed to our community as humble servants, uplifting the physical, mental, and most importantly the spiritual welfare of all whom they have encountered; and

Whereas, in our beloved Fourth Congressional District of Georgia, we are honored that the fruit of this wonderful marriage has produced one daughter and son-in-law Shannon and Terry Clark, and seven grandchildren; and

Whereas, Gus Dixon is a remarkable and tenacious man of God and Willie Mae Dixon is a phenomenal and virtuous Proverbs 31 woman, both being members of Welcome Friend Baptist Church in DeKalb County, Georgia where, under the leadership of Pastor John Smith, Gus serves as Director of Christian Education and Willie Mae serves as Director of the Mission ministry; and

Whereas, Gus and Willie Mae Dixon are distinguished citizens of Georgia's Fourth Congressional district, being spiritual warriors who possess great compassion for all of God's children, and who are fearless servants and leaders with a vision and passion to improve the lives of others; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to honor and recognize Gus and Willie Mae Dixon as they celebrate their golden anniversary, and 50 years of marital bliss; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim July 1, 2017 as Gus and Willie Mae Dixon Day in the 4th Congressional District.

Proclaimed, this 1st day of July, 2017.

IN RECOGNITION OF DAVID LIM

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor David Lim for his eight years of outstanding service on the San Mateo City Council and as mayor in 2013 and 2017. David's dedication to

justice and his community have informed his leadership on important issues such as social justice, public safety, infrastructure, education, diversity and the environment. I've had the occasion to work with David on one of the most pressing challenges in our region, the housing crisis. David is a true champion of his middle class constituents and has showed great courage in forthrightly addressing the thorny issues of affordable rental housing.

David was first elected to the council in 2009, at the height of the Great Recession. He instantly became a very active member of the council, helping guide the city of San Mateo through a difficult and long recovery process. He always encouraged input from residents and was driven by a dedication to being fair and to making the best decision.

Serving in a booming economy also proved challenging. As wave after wave of new high-earning tech and biotech workers arrived, escalating rents and skyrocketing housing prices undermined the stability of long-time low- and middle-income residents. Justice-minded and seeking to maintain the socio-economic and racial diversity of the region, David represented all residents. He pulled landlords, tenants and regional anti-displacement experts into conversations to develop solutions to the affordability crisis. David pushed the city to do more to support low-income workers and advocated for increasing the minimum wage.

As a young parent himself, David is an educator at heart. Coaching high school mock trial teams and advocating for local students and schools, David wants all children to attend safe schools and to receive a good education. When he learned that immigrant families needed translation services in order to understand the enrollment process he pushed local school districts to take action. David never stops turning problems into creative solutions.

He also worked to improve San Mateo's environmental stewardship. David has succeeded in his goal to leave the city better than he found it. While on the council he helped launch the Sustainability Commission which has reduced the use of plastic bags and Styrofoam containers.

David was raised in Southern California where he attended local public schools. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Political Science and his Master's degree in Education from UCLA. For two years, he taught history at a middle school in LA but then moved to Washington, D.C. to work for Congressman Bob Matsui of Sacramento. In 1999, he returned to the Bay Area and pursued his law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. As a young Bay Area district attorney, married with young twin daughters, he searched for a community to call home. In 2001, he moved to San Mateo, the town where his grandfather, whose father had emigrated from China to San Francisco's Chinatown, had once been a household servant.

David and his wife Terri continue to live in San Mateo with their three children, Caroline, Katherine and Harrison.

Today, San Mateo is one of the most diverse communities in the country. David was the first Asian American to be elected to the city council and his cultural sensitivity has been an invaluable asset to the city. He believes some of the best ideas and fresh perspectives come from young people. At public meetings that can last late into the evening,

David has been known to rearrange the speakers cards—with public approval, of course—so that school-aged residents can address the council and get home to complete their schoolwork. In even small ways, David is always focused on making life better for his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I admire David Lim greatly and ask the members of the House of Representatives to rise with me to recognize a remarkable public servant, devoted husband and father, and tireless advocate for others. While he is leaving the council, I have no doubt that he will continue to contribute to his beloved community for many years to come.

HONORING MARIA WOLFE OF PENNSYLVANIA ON HER RETIREMENT AFTER MORE THAN 38 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I extend my sincere congratulations to my constituent, Maria Wolfe, on her retirement after more than 38 years of service to the federal government.

Maria began her federal career with the Federal Communications Commission in 1979 and transferred to the Navy Ships Parts Control Center in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania in 1981. Over the decades, Maria's hard work and commitment to excellence led to several promotions, culminating with her current efforts to support the Littoral Combat Ship, Outfitting Branch, and the U.S. Coast Guard Supply Support and Logistic programs.

Her peers describe a true professional who has provided great support to our Nation's Sailors and the United States Navy. Maria's dedication has touched the lives of countless people, and her legacy of service to our Nation is commendable.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I thank and congratulate Maria Wolfe on her service and wish her great happiness and success in her future adventures.

PROCLAMATION FOR GREGORY AND BETTY LEVETT

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following proclamation for Gregory and Betty Levett:

Whereas, the 4th Congressional District of Georgia recognizes two citizens who exemplifies those who are catalyst servants throughout the community; and

Whereas, the 2017 Community Connections Award recipients are promoting the concept of "One Community-One Goal" and celebrating age by providing the seniors they serve with dignity, care, choice and the ability to "age in place"; and

Whereas, Senior Connections annually recognize outstanding individuals promoting a

better and stronger DeKalb County who are Trail Blazers in the area of leadership, service, scholarship and community through the Community Connections Award; and

Whereas, this year, Mr. Gregory and Mrs. Betty Levett are being honored as the 2017 Community Connections Award recipients. Mr. and Mrs. Levett have unselfishly brought community service, honor and excellence to the citizens of DeKalb County and beyond; and

Whereas, Mr. and Mrs. Levett give of themselves unconditionally to build a legacy of service and commitment as entrepreneurs and owners of Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory, and by demonstrating their unwavering pledge as philanthropists, contributing more than 1 million dollars to various charities and organizations throughout their 35 years of service; and

Whereas, the lives of many in our district are especially touched by Mr. and Mrs. Levett's support of the local Senior connections, their active leadership as board members at DeKalb Medical and their advocacy of other critical senior services throughout Georgia; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia have set aside this day to honor and recognize Mr. Gregory Levett and Mrs. Betty Levett for their outstanding service to our senior community and our District; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim June 17, 2017 as Gregory and Betty Levett Day in the 4th Congressional District of Georgia.

Proclaimed, this 17th day of June, 2017.

HONORING THE YEARS OF SERVICE OF MARIA TERESA SANTILLAN-BEAS TO THE CITY OF LYNWOOD

HON. NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGÁN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Honorable Maria Teresa Santillan-Beas for her fourteen years of service to the City of Lynwood; Tuesday, December 5th, she will be ending her term as Mayor.

Whereas Maria Teresa Santillan-Beas was first elected to the Lynwood City Council in 2003, and made history as the first woman elected in a decade, and first Latina to ever be elected; and

Whereas during her time in office, she has worked tirelessly to provide affordable housing opportunities for low-income families, to improve the quality of life for senior citizens, and to increase public safety programs in the City of Lynwood; and

Whereas she has remained an active participant in the community and service organizations and is a member of the Lynwood Lions Club, and serves as a Big Sister for the Big Brothers Big Sisters Club; and

Whereas she has also held other leadership roles in community-based organizations, such as the Lynwood Neighborhood Block Watch, the St. Emydius School Parent Teacher Organization, and others: now therefore I commend Honorable Maria Teresa Santillan-Beas for fourteen years of outstanding service to the City of Lynwood and neighboring communities.

HONORING DR. HUMPHREY LEE
UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM
NORTHWEST SHOALS COMMU-
NITY COLLEGE

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the great leadership and character of Dr. Humphrey Lee on his retirement from Northwest Shoals Community College in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

Dr. Lee was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama. After graduating high school, he entered the University of Alabama where he earned his bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees.

After leaving the University of Alabama, Dr. Lee dedicated the next 42 years of his life to the two-year college system in the state of Alabama. His four decades with Alabama's two-year college system carried him to Brewer State Junior College and Shelton State Community College. Finally, Dr. Lee became President of Northwest Shoals Community College in 2004.

During his 14 years serving as President at Northwest Shoals Community College, Dr. Lee made workforce development the keystone of his administration. To achieve this goal, Dr. Lee oversaw tremendous growth and improvement in the programs offered by the school in areas such as Automotive Service Technology, Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning and Cyber Security, just to name a few.

While Dr. Lee is retiring from Alabama's two-year college system, I know that he will remain, as he always has been, very active in the local community, as he serves on numerous boards and is the current Chairman of the Shoals Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Lee has two sons; Preston who is married to Kristina; and Spencer who is married to Marie, with two grandsons, Brayden and Landon.

Once again, I congratulate Dr. Lee on his many years of service to education in the state of Alabama, as well as on his well-deserved retirement. I wish him the best in the coming years and on future endeavors.

PROCLAMATION FOR KES, INC.

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a proclamation for KES, Inc.

Whereas, in the Fourth Congressional District of Georgia, citizens of different cultures strive to bring awareness and enlightenment to our community; and

Whereas, KES, Inc., since 1996, under the leadership of Mr. Kenneth and Mrs. Sandra Browner and their family, has been a blessing to my district by making the needs of citizens that require special attention a priority and therefore enhancing their quality of life; and

Whereas, KES, Inc., has sustained the lineage of many generations, breaking bond-

ages, bringing blessings and strengthening communities, by providing excellence in care and services while assisting development and enhancement of the quality of life for adults and children with psychological, social and physical challenges; and

Whereas, KES, Inc., annually hosts a Day of Inclusion to bring our community together in a day of fellowship, to educate and acknowledge the different disabilities and abilities that its members have; and

Whereas, KES, Inc., and all the members of its staff are ambassadors of goodwill that make the 4th Congressional District of Georgia a jewel in the nation; and

Whereas, our community has been strengthened in our awareness, our lives have been touched and our spirits uplifted through the service of this beloved organization; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to honor and recognize all of the individuals that give of themselves for the betterment of others and to recognize the leadership and service of KES, Inc., as it celebrates another year of hosting its Day of Inclusion; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim July 15, 2017 as KES, Inc. Day in the 4th Congressional District.

Proclaimed, this 22nd day of May, 2017.

HONORING YOVANNA BROWNE

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the amazing work of Yovanna Browne who is retiring at the end of this year. Yovanna, who worked in my Temple, TX District Office, is as dedicated a public servant as any Member of Congress could hope for. Lauded throughout her career for her tenacity and attention to detail, she's been a mission-critical member of every place she's worked.

Yovanna's resume is a testament to a life devoted to public service. Two decades were spent working for a variety of offices in both the Army and Navy, where she received numerous commendations from both branches. Another decade was dedicated to Central Texas College, her alma mater, and working to ensure soldiers could navigate the complex Tricare program. Luckily for Central Texas, Yovanna spent the last twelve years as a Lead Case Worker in my Temple Office.

District office staff have as challenging a job there is in public service. They often deal with constituents who are at their wits' end and have lost faith in the government that is supposed to serve them. Yovanna's combination of empathy and expertise have helped countless Central Texans navigate the often-challenging world of government agencies and services. She treats all with kindness and respect, lending a thoughtful ear to their concerns while staying focused on how to best be of assistance. Her extraordinary efforts, commitment to excellence, and skillful work has enabled my Temple office to serve my constituents at the high level they deserve.

While my office is losing Yovanna to a richly-deserved retirement, she'll always be a member of the Carter family and a shining example of the best in public service. I join my

staff, and all those who've been impacted by her commitment to excellence, in wishing her nothing but the best in the next chapter of her life.

HONORING CYNTHIA BUSHMAN OF
PENNSYLVANIA ON HER RETIRE-
MENT AFTER MORE THAN 37
YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE FED-
ERAL GOVERNMENT

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I extend my sincere congratulations to my constituent, Cynthia Bushman, on her retirement after more than 37 years of service to the federal government.

Ms. Bushman has served with the Naval Supply Systems Command, the Naval Sea Systems Command, and currently as Outfitting Team Lead for the Outfitting Support Branch at the Naval Sea Logistics Center. Her peers describe a true professional whose attention to detail and professional excellence have provided great support to our Nation's Sailors and the United States Navy.

Ms. Bushman's tireless dedication has touched the lives of countless people and challenged all with whom she served to be the best. Her legacy of service to our Nation is commendable.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I thank and congratulate Cynthia Bushman on her service and wish her great happiness and success in her future adventures.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DONALD
C. POGUE

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my dear friend and colleague, the late honorable Donald C. Pogue. Judge Pogue passed away peacefully last October and his absence is felt by all who knew him.

Born in Macomb, Illinois in 1947, Don graduated magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Dartmouth College in 1969 and earned his juris doctorate and masters of art in philosophy from Yale in 1973. Following graduation, he began his legal career representing labor unions at his firm, Kester, Pogue & Gould, in Hartford. During his fifteen years of practice, Judge Pogue lectured on labor law at the University of Connecticut School of Law, assisted in teaching Harvard Law School's program on negotiation and dispute resolution for lawyers, and chaired the Connecticut Bar Association's Labor and Employment Law Section.

In 1989, Don was appointed Commissioner of Connecticut Hospitals and Healthcare by Governor O'Neill, and then Chairman by Governor Weicker. In 1994, Don became a judge in Connecticut's Superior Court and was appointed to the U.S. Court of International Trade by President Clinton just one year later. There he led the Court's Long Range Planning and Budget committees. In 2010 he became

Chief Judge and served as a statutory member of the Judicial Conference of the United States Courts. Don assumed senior status in 2014. In addition to being a great lawyer and judge, he was also a devoted husband, father, and grandfather and an active member of his community. He served on the Board of Connecticut Hospice and volunteered there for over a decade.

Mr. Speaker, I came to know Don Pogue during his time as chair of the Hospitals and Healthcare Commission, from 1989 to 1994. I was a state representative at the time, leading the Connecticut General Assembly's Public Health Committee. It was a time of great change in healthcare. Working with Don, we created one of the first children's health insurance programs in the country and initiated cutting edge reform to lower healthcare costs. Don was a brilliant public servant who was always the smartest guy in the room. Despite that, he was an extremely courteous gentleman who always was focused on helping the people of the state, particularly the less fortunate.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in remembering Dan's life and work. His public service serves as an example to all

who hold public office to stay focused on the people who vested their trust in us. Although Don is deeply missed, we take comfort in knowing his commitment to justice left the world a better place.

PROCLAMATION FOR THE MANDIR
OF LILBURN

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following proclamation for the Mandir of Lilburn:

Whereas, Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), is a global socio-spiritual Hindu organization established by Bhagwan Swaminarayan more than 200 years ago; and

Whereas, BAPS is dedicated to improving society through individual growth by fostering faith, unity, and selfless service; and

Whereas, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Lilburn, Georgia, inaugurated by His Holi-

ness Pramukh Swami Maharaj in 2007, has served as a center for spirituality, and the celebration of Hindu culture, customs, and architecture; and

Whereas, BAPS and its followers, have provided humanitarian services throughout communities in the State of Georgia and across our Nation; and

Whereas, His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj appointed Mahant Swami Maharaj as his spiritual successor and the sixth Guru of BAPS; and

Whereas, His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, the spiritual leader and Guru of BAPS, arrived in the State of Georgia for the first time as the spiritual leader and Guru of BAPS to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Lilburn, Georgia; and

Whereas the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to honor and recognize His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj for his leadership and service; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim July 6th, 2017 as The Mandir of Lilburn, Georgia Day in the 4th Congressional District.

Proclaimed, this 22nd day of May, 2017.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate confirmed the nomination of Kirstjen Nielsen, of Virginia, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7825–S7857

Measures Introduced: Three bills were introduced, as follows: S. 2192–2194. **Page S7848**

Measures Reported:

S. 1223, to repeal the Klamath Tribe Judgment Fund Act, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 115–190)

S. 447, to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

S. 2193, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve health care for veterans. **Page S7846**

Balash Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at a time to be determined by the Majority Leader, in consultation with the Democratic Leader, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Joseph Balash, of Alaska, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior; that there be one hour of debate on the nomination equally divided in the usual form, and that following the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination, with no intervening action or debate. **Page S7840**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 62 yeas to 37 nays (Vote No. EX. 305), Kirstjen Nielsen, of Virginia, to be Secretary of Homeland Security. **Pages S7829–34, S7834–39**

Emily Webster Murphy, of Missouri, to be Administrator of General Services. **Page S7839, S7857**

Glen R. Smith, of Iowa, to be a Member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration, for a term expiring May 21, 2022.

Page S7839, S7857

Messages from the House: **Pages S7844–45**

Measures Read the First Time: **Page S7845**

Executive Communications: **Pages S7845–46**

Petitions and Memorials: **Page S7846**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S7846–48**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7848–49**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Page S7848**

Additional Statements: **Pages S7843–44**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S7849**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S7849**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—305) **Page S7839**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:26 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, December 6, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7857.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

OPIOID CRISIS IN AMERICA

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies addressing the opioid crisis in America, focusing on prevention, treatment, and recovery, after receiving testimony from former Representative Patrick J. Kennedy, President's Commission on Combatting Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis; and Elinore McCance-Katz, Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Francis S. Collins, Director, National Institutes of Health, and Debra Houry, Director, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

all of the Department of Health and Human Services.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 2155, to promote economic growth, provide tailored regulatory relief, and enhance consumer protections, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

The nomination of Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Timothy R. Petty, of Indiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, who was introduced by Senator Risch, and Linda Capuano, of Texas, to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

ENERGY LEGISLATION

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy concluded a hearing to examine S. 1336, to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize hydroelectric production incentives and hydroelectric efficiency improvement incentives, S. 1455, to amend the United States Energy Storage Competitiveness Act of 2007 to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish new goals for the Department of Energy relating to energy storage and to carry out certain demonstration projects relating to energy storage, S. 1563, to authorize the Office of Fossil Energy to develop advanced separation technologies for the extraction and recovery of rare earth elements and minerals from coal and coal byproducts, S. 1851, to require the Secretary of Energy to establish an energy storage research program, demonstration and deployment program, and technical

assistance and grant program, S. 1876, to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to advance energy storage deployment by reducing the cost of energy storage through research, development, and demonstration, S. 1981, to amend the Natural Gas Act to expedite approval of exports of small volumes of natural gas, and S. 2030, to deem the compliance date for amended energy conservation standards for ceiling light kits to be January 21, 2020, after receiving testimony from Senator Tillis; and Mark Menezes, Under Secretary of Energy.

AUTHORITY OVER INTERNATIONAL ACCORDS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President, Congress, and shared authority over the international accords, after receiving testimony from Curtis A. Bradley, Duke Law School, Durham, North Carolina; and Avril Haines, Columbia University, New York, New York.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Kenneth L. Marcus, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and Johnny Collett, of Kentucky, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, both of the Department of Education, and Scott A. Mugno, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary, and William Beach, of Kansas, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, both of the Department of Labor, after the nominees, who were introduced by Senator Alexander, testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 12 public bills, H.R. 4546–4557 were introduced.

Page H9664

Additional Cosponsors:

Page H9665

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 2897, to authorize the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Director of the National Park Service to enter into cooperative management agreements for the operation, maintenance, and management of units of the National Park System in the

District of Columbia, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–436, Part 2);

H.R. 4477, to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–437);

H.R. 3979, to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize the volunteer services, community partnership, and refuge education programs of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–438);

H.R. 1132, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a 2-year prohibition on employment in a career civil service position for any former political appointee, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–439); and

H. Res. 645, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 38) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a means by which nonresidents of a State whose residents may carry concealed firearms may also do so in the State (H. Rept. 115–440).

Pages H9663–64

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Hice (GA) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today.

Page H9623

Recess: The House recessed at 11:04 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon.

Page H9630

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by a yea-and-nay vote of 224 yeas to 183 nays with one answering "present", Roll No. 657.

Pages H9630, H9641

Change of Conferee: The Chair announced the removal of Representative Walden as a conferee on H.R. 1, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, and appointed Representative Upton to fill the vacancy.

Page H9641

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2017: H.R. 3731, amended, to provide overtime pay for employees of the United States Secret Service, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 407 yeas to 4 nays, Roll No. 655;

Pages H9633–37, H9639–40

Stopping Abusive Female Exploitation Act: H.R. 3317, amended, to amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the penalty for female genital mutilation, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 409 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 656; and

Pages H9637–39, H9640

Taylor Force Act: H.R. 1164, amended, to condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps

by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens.

Pages H9648–53

Member Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Conyers, wherein he resigned as Representative for the Thirteenth Congressional District of Michigan, effective Tuesday, December 5, 2017.

Page H9648

Whole Number of the House: The Chair announced to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Conyers, the whole number of the House is 433.

Page H9648

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measure under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Enhancing Veteran Care Act: S. 1266, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Pages H9641–43

Condemning ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and calling for an end to the attacks in and an immediate restoration of humanitarian access to the state of Rakhine in Burma: H. Con. Res. 90, amended, condemning ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and calling for an end to the attacks in and an immediate restoration of humanitarian access to the state of Rakhine in Burma;

Pages H9643–48

Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act of 2017: H.R. 2658, amended, to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people, to defend democratic governance and combat widespread public corruption in Venezuela; and

Pages H9653–59

Expressing concern and condemnation over the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela: H. Res. 259, amended, expressing concern and condemnation over the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

Pages H9659–63

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H9639–41. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Committee Meetings

CONCEALED CARRY RECIPROCITY ACT OF 2017

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 38, the "Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017". The Committee granted, by record vote of 8–3, a closed rule for H.R. 38. The rule provides

one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–45 shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Chairman Goodlatte, and Representatives Nadler, Jackson Lee, Schneider, and Titus.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of R. D. James, of Missouri, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense, 10 a.m., SD–406.

Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management, and Regulatory Oversight, to hold hearings to examine challenges facing Superfund and waste cleanup efforts following natural disasters, 2:30 p.m., SD–406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Near East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Counterterrorism, to hold hearings to examine beyond ISIS, focusing on countering terrorism, radicalization, and promoting stability in North Africa, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine adapting to defend the Homeland against the evolving international terrorist threat, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: business meeting to consider S. 1870, to amend the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 to secure urgent resources vital to Indian victims of crime; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine S. 664, to approve the settlement of the water rights claims of the Navajo in Utah, to authorize construction of projects in connection therewith, and S. 1770, to approve the settlement of water rights claims of the Hualapai Tribe and certain allottees in the State of Arizona, to authorize construction of a water project relating to those water rights claims, 2:30 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine firearm accessory regulation and enforcing Federal and

state reporting to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), 10 a.m., SH–216.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine America's aging workforce, focusing on opportunities and challenges, 9:30 a.m., SD–562.

House

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions, hearing entitled "Workplace Leave Policies: Opportunities and Challenges for Employers and Working Families", 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Full Committee, business meeting on subcommittee membership; and markup on H.R. 453, the "Relief from New Source Performance Standards Act of 2017"; H.R. 350, the "Recognizing the Protection of Motorsports Act of 2017"; H.R. 1119, the "SENSE Act"; H.R. 1733, to direct the Secretary of Energy to review and update a report on the energy and environmental benefits of the re-refining of used lubricating oil; H.R. 1917, the "Blocking Regulatory Interference from Closing Kilns Act of 2017"; H.R. 2872, the "Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act"; and H.R. 2880, the "Promoting Closed-Loop Pumped Storage Hydropower Act", 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, hearing entitled "Sustainable Housing Finance: Private Sector Perspectives on Housing Finance Reform, Part IV", 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled "Advancing Human Rights to Combat Extremism", 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, hearing entitled "Brexit: A Negotiation Update", 2 p.m., 2200 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, hearing entitled "U.S. Policy Towards Tibet: Access, Religious Freedom, and Human Rights", 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, hearing on H.R. 4465, the "Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017", 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 477, the "Small Business Mergers, Acquisitions, Sales, and Brokerage Simplification Act of 2017"; H.R. 3971, the "Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act of 2017"; and H.J. Res. 123, the "Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018", 3 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Technology, hearing entitled "From Lab to Market: A Review of NSF Innovation Corps", 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Space, hearing entitled "NASA's Next Four Large Telescopes", 2 p.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Wednesday, December 6

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, December 6

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will be in a period of morning business.

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of H.R. 38—Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017 (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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