



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2018

No. 5

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, enter the lives of our lawmakers today and give them pure hearts. Enlighten and illuminate their minds that they may know You, who are the way, the truth, and the life. When they are tired, refresh them; when they are lonely, cheer them; when they are tempted, strengthen them; and when they are perplexed, guide them. Lord, help them so to live that they will be prepared to see Your face in peace. Make our Senators positive people who are expectant of Your best for our Nation and world. Radiate Your hope through them so that America will remain a shining city on a hill.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 9, 2018.

To the Senate:

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

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

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, I mentioned that, already, 1 million Americans and counting will receive raises or special bonuses, thanks to the incentives created by the historic tax reform law that Congress passed and the President signed just last month.

For example, Darden Restaurants, Inc., which employs 175,000 people, announced it is preparing to invest \$20 million in its most important asset—its employees. AT&T announced that 200,000 employees would receive \$1,000 bonuses. In Kentucky, Turning Point Brands announced that their workers would also receive \$1,000 bonuses. So far, more than 100 companies have announced similar plans.

Across the country and a variety of different industries, workers are receiving significant one-time bonuses, permanent pay raises, more generous retirement contributions, or other benefits. And their employers confirm that it was tax reform that made this possible.

How is all this happening? How is it happening? After all, those who were

intent on opposing tax reform painted an apocalyptic picture. Over in the House, the minority leader said tax reform was “Armageddon.” Here in the Senate, my friend the Democratic leader said there was “nothing about this bill that suits the needs of the American worker.”

Fortunately, a majority in the House and a majority in the Senate knew better. We know that the economy is not a zero-sum game. We know it is completely backward to think that American businesses need to lose in order for American workers to win. To the contrary, in the 21st century economy, Americans are all in this together.

When our economy grows stagnant and when taxes and regulations make it harder for companies to compete with foreign ones, that is when wages fall flat and job opportunities dry up. But when Washington gets out of the way, cuts back regulations, and modernizes the Tax Code, when we give businesses more flexibility to invest and expand, then, as we are already seeing, workers reap the benefits.

This is not some partisan talking point. As one economist wrote just before we passed tax reform, “It’s the consensus view of professional economists” that “lowering corporate income taxes would increase the wages of workers.”

Tax reform became law less than 1 month ago—1 month ago—and thanks to tax reform, as this chart points out, 1 million American workers and counting are getting a bonus or a raise. That is what is happening, and this is just the beginning.

Raises and bonuses are not the only way tax reform is providing a big help to middle-class families, like the Kentuckians I represent. The law also cuts taxes substantially for individuals and families, so they can keep more of their own money and send less to Washington.

We reduced marginal rates. We doubled the standard deduction, effectively creating a new zero tax bracket

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



Printed on recycled paper.

for the first \$24,000 a family earns—zero taxes on the first \$24,000 a family earns. We significantly increased the child tax credit. We expanded the deduction for medical expenses, and the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act repealed the punitive individual mandate tax penalty at the heart of ObamaCare. That law penalized hard-working Americans twice—first by failing to create health insurance options that met the needs of working families and then by imposing a heavy fine on the families who didn't want or couldn't afford the coverage. By zeroing out that unfair penalty, we have repealed a core piece of ObamaCare and restored families' flexibility to choose the health insurance that works for them.

The result of all this is significant savings for middle-class American families. A typical family of four earning a median family income will keep more than \$2,000 this year that they would have otherwise sent to the government. Workers will begin to see the difference in their paychecks as soon as February. Less of their money will be deducted and sent to the IRS. More will be deposited into their own bank accounts.

So the early impact of this historic tax reform legislation is quite clear. Job creators and entrepreneurs are more optimistic, more than 1 million Americans are already getting raises and bonuses, and the groundwork is being laid for a more powerful and more competitive U.S. economy that attracts more investment and creates more homegrown jobs.

It is no surprise that, historically, tax cuts have enjoyed bipartisan support. This time, unfortunately, none of our Democratic colleagues chose to vote for this once-in-a-generation tax relief—not a one in the House or in the Senate. But I am proud that the majorities in Congress were able to pass this bill so that the President could sign it into law. One million Americans, and soon to be many more, will be grateful.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, there are a number of outstanding matters before the Senate that must be addressed by January 19. We must pass an

extension of government funding. We must reach a deal to lift the spending caps to spare devastating cuts to our military support and funding for urgent domestic priorities. We must extend the Children's Health Insurance Program and community health centers and the 702 FISA Court program. We must pass disaster aid, and we must resolve the future of the Dreamers.

Some of these issues, particularly CHIP and FISA, could have been dealt with by the majority a long time ago. There are bipartisan majorities that would have voted to extend those programs, but the majority leader chose not to put them on the floor because they were busy pursuing a partisan "favor the wealthy" tax bill.

Some of these issues still require further compromise. It is no secret that we haven't come to final agreement on the spending caps. Both Democrats and Republicans want our troops to have the resources they need to do the tough job we ask of them. At the same time, we Democrats want to make sure that we are making the right kinds of investments in the middle class. The whole campaign was about the middle class, and now we are going to abandon them because there are such needs for defense. The two are not mutually exclusive. We don't believe they are, and our Republican colleagues have sort of lost their grip on saying: Well, we can't increase the deficit, after a \$1.5 trillion tax cut mainly for the wealthy and powerful corporations.

So we are fighting hard to make sure we are making the right kinds of investments in the middle class. That is why we are pushing hard to raise the spending caps on the domestic side, so we can do more in the fight against the opioid crisis, so we can do more to help our brave veterans get quality healthcare, and so we honor the promise made to over a million pensioners who contributed to and earned every penny of their pensions. These are all very important issues. Ask a mom or dad whose kid is addicted to opioids whether that can wait. Ask a pensioner who is so nervous that he or she will not get enough dollars to retire on and feed themselves. Ask a veteran who has been waiting in line for healthcare because the Veterans' Administration is not fully funded for the healthcare needs of our veterans. They all think those are just as important—not more, not less than funding defense. We will stand firm and strong that both are important. The only argument our colleagues seem to have against this is that it increases the deficit and, as I said, they lost all claim to that one with the tax bill.

Now, teamsters, carpenters, and miners have worked their entire lives under the expectation that they could retire with a sense of dignity afforded by a modest pension. These are the ones our colleagues seem to be just adamantly opposed to. Let them go home to their miners, to their teamsters, to their food workers and tell

them: You don't deserve a pension even though you paid in every month.

We can't just shrug our shoulders and do nothing. We ought to fix it.

My friend, the majority leader, thinks defense is important, but the other is not. We Democrats believe both are important, and we must and should do both together. Surely, the deficit, again, can't be the problem after adding over \$1.5 trillion in red ink. So let's make investments we know are essential in our military and in our middle class.

We will also have to make sure the disaster package treats all our States and territories fairly; that California and Puerto Rico and the Mountain West and the U.S. Virgin Islands get the aid they need, just like Texas and Louisiana and Florida.

We have to reach agreement on a new healthcare package that admits the new reality of our healthcare system. The Republicans repealed the individual mandate in their tax bill, an act that will raise premiums and lower coverage. The old healthcare compromise legislation was crafted before the Republican tax bill. PATTY MURRAY has said, under new circumstances, we need a new proposal. We cannot just enact the previous Alexander-Murray bill because of the change our Republican colleagues made to the healthcare system.

Then, of course, there is the DACA issue. That is going to require further compromise. There are many Republicans in this Chamber who want to enshrine DACA protections into law—as every Democrat does—just as there are many Democrats who would pass additional border security measures into law—smart, reasonable, and practical border measures. A deal on this issue can be reached if both parties are committed to good-faith negotiations.

The problem thus far has been President Trump's insistence on a completely ineffective and absurdly expensive wall as part of any deal on DACA.

In fact, we learned this morning, in a stunning New York Times article by Ron Nixon, that the Trump administration is proposing to cut back from smart border security measures to pay for a border wall. I ask unanimous consent that the article by Mr. Nixon in the New York Times be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

According to the Times, which reviewed internal budget guidance from the OMB, the Trump administration would cut or delay funding for border surveillance, cut or delay funding for radar technology, patrol boats, and, maybe more crucially, Customs officers, all to ask taxpayers to pay for the wall—funding to upgrade surveillance aircraft, extremely effective at stopping illegal crossing at the border, particularly drugs, denied; funding to hire new Customs officers, denied; funding for video surveillance with infrared cameras in areas with high incidents of border crossings, cut to "offset the

costs of Presidential priorities.” What an absurd proposition.

Security experts have testified for decades that effective border security includes a variety of technologies and resources, drones, infrared sensors, Customs and Border Patrol agents, and officers. In some places, secure fence is appropriate. We agree with that. These were all ideas included in comprehensive immigration reform. That the Trump administration would cannibalize funding for these smart border security measures to pay for a wall that will not work makes no sense.

He said he campaigned on it. Oh, no, Mr. President. You campaigned on a wall that Mexico would pay for. We are waiting, but, again, to take away the things that are needed to protect the border for a symbolic and ineffective political gesture is wrong. There is nothing to this than politics. President Trump is fighting for an empty symbol rather than smart policy that will actually produce better security at our borders. We Democrats are willing, able, and eager to work with our Republican colleagues and the administration on smart, effective border solutions.

As I have said, there may be a few defined places where a secure fence makes sense, but a medieval wall that you can't see through across the length of the southern border will not make us any safer. Walls can be scaled over. Walls can be tunneled under. There are, as I have been told, many tunnels under the wall in San Diego, some of which have not been detected.

There is also the issue of eminent domain. The Federal Government would have to conscript hundreds of square miles of land from American citizens to build a wall. The administration still hasn't produced plans for where to put it, and, of course, President Trump promised, once again, that Mexico would pay for it, not taxpayers. If you can read anything into the election, it was for that. The polling data shows the majority of Americans don't believe the wall is the right thing to do.

It is not responsible to insist that American taxpayers pay for an absurdly expensive and ineffective border wall or else the government shuts down. If the President goes down that path and insists on the wall or shuts down the government, which he said back in September, make no mistake about it, a government shutdown will fall entirely on his shoulders.

If President Trump can find a way to get Mexico to pay for the wall, while American taxpayers pay for things that really make a difference to secure the border, he should reveal that to the American people. Until that time, Democrats will work with our Republican colleagues on smart border security, effective border security, just as we fight to protect the Dreamers.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Jan. 8, 2018]
TO PAY FOR WALL; TRUMP WOULD CUT
PROVEN BORDER SECURITY MEASURES
(By Ron Nixon)

The Trump administration would cut or delay funding for border surveillance, radar technology, patrol boats and customs agents in its upcoming spending plan to curb illegal immigration—all proven security measures that officials and experts have said are more effective than building a wall along the Mexican border.

President Trump has made the border wall a focus of his campaign against illegal immigration to stop drugs, terrorists and gangs like MS-13 from coming into the United States. Under spending plans submitted last week to Congress, the wall would cost \$18 billion over the next 10 years, and be erected along nearly 900 miles of the southern border.

The wall also has become a bargaining chip in negotiations with Congress as lawmakers seek to prevent nearly 800,000 young undocumented immigrants from being deported.

But security experts said the president's focus on a border wall ignores the constantly evolving nature of terrorism, immigration and drug trafficking.

“People that are dealing with this issue know that a third-century solution to a 21st-century problem is not going to fix this long-term,” said Representative Will Hurd, Republican of Texas and a former C.I.A. officer. Mr. Hurd, whose district includes more than 800 miles of border territory with Mexico, has pushed for more funding for sensors and other border security technologies.

Homeland Security officials have long and frequently described border security as a holistic system, made up not just of walls and fencing but also patrol routes, lighting, cameras, sensors and personnel.

David Bier, a policy analyst with the Cato Institute, said a border wall would do little to stop the drug trade. Most of the cocaine, heroin and methamphetamines smuggled into the United States come through legal ports of entry rather than areas that would be stopped by a wall, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Nor would a wall stop illegal immigration, other experts said. Data from the Department of Homeland Security and research groups like the New York-based Center for Migration Studies show that most undocumented immigrants now simply overstay legally obtained short-term visas—and did not sneak across the border.

“So unless the wall is 35,000 feet high, it's not going to do much to stop those overstaying these visas,” said Robert Warren, a fellow at the Center for Migration Studies who has worked on immigration issues for Republican and Democratic presidents.

Additionally, Mr. Warren said, many people who have been stopped by the Border Patrol in recent years are seeking asylum—including some who simply walk up to agents and surrender.

Mr. Trump's budget request for a wall represents more than half of the \$33 billion spending blueprint for border security over the next decade. It either eliminates critical funding for border security programs or shifts money from them, threatening to leave gaping holes. A Government Accountability Office study released last February found that Customs and Border Protection has not shown how much fencing and walls bolster border security.

An internal budget guidance document for the 2019 fiscal year shows that the White House Office of Management and Budget asked officials at the Homeland Security Department to reduce or delay funding requests for additional border security technology

and equipment. Instead, the document instructed, Homeland Security should dramatically increase funding for a wall on the Mexico border.

Homeland Security officials said the plans are subject to change. Still, the document underscores the priority that a border wall remains for Mr. Trump, who promised its construction during his presidential campaign. It also instructed the department to seek \$1.6 billion in the upcoming fiscal year to build 74 miles of a border wall—about \$700 million more than Homeland Security officials felt they needed to build that.

Parts of the document were viewed by The New York Times; the rest of it was based on reports by the Democratic staff of the Senate Homeland Security Committee.

The cuts include money for a remote video surveillance system in the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas, an area known for high numbers of border crossings and drug smuggling. The system is composed of infrared cameras mounted on poles, towers and buildings, allowing Border Patrol agents to track attempted smuggling and border crossings.

In the internal document, the White House budget office called the surveillance system important but said its funding requests were lowered “to offset the costs of presidential priorities not funded in the D.H.S. request.”

Customs and Border Protection faces several cuts.

Its \$7.9 million request for technology upgrades to its P-3 surveillance aircraft—which operates thousands of miles beyond American borders to track narcotics being shipped from Colombia, Peru and other drug producing countries—was denied. In 2016, the latest data available, the P-3 aircrews contributed to 145 drug seizures, helping American and foreign authorities capture a combined 34,108 pounds of marijuana and 193,197 pounds of cocaine.

The internal document also suggested delaying a request to buy 15 new Coastal Interceptor boats to catch drug smugglers. The agency had sought nearly \$15 million to replace its aging fleet to keep up with drug smugglers' smaller, faster boats.

It also would cut nearly 200 of the 500 canine units that customs officials say play a key role in programs to prevent terrorism and drug smuggling. The dogs' handlers would then be reassigned to ports on the southwest border to help with staffing shortages.

“The lack of funding and the elimination of the canine teams is shortsighted and poses a serious threat to border security,” said Tony Reardon, the president of the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents customs officers. “If you are going to focus on border security, you can't do that without talking about the men and women who man these ports of entry.”

Perhaps most significantly, the proposed budget would not fund the hiring of new customs officers—the agents who denied 200,000 people from entering the United States at ports of entry in fiscal 2017 and who stopped 600,000 pounds of drugs, including cocaine, heroin, meth and fentanyl. Customs officers also intercepted nearly \$70 million in illicit currency, much of it headed back across the border to fill the coffers of Mexican drug cartels.

Experts said the absence of hiring funds could potentially have the most impact on border security; the agents form a crucial line of defense against smugglers and terrorist threats. An internal Customs and Border Protection review showed that the agency's ranks were about 3,700 officers below required levels, according to the National Treasury Employees Union.

By comparison, Mr. Trump has called for hiring 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents

and 10,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

“A wall is the single most expensive thing you can do in terms of trying to secure the border, and not necessarily the most effective on its own,” said Doris Meissner, who was the top immigration official during the Clinton administration. “If you want to be strategic about it, you want to invest in technologies and programs that can stop threats well before they can actually get to the border.”

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, just over 2 weeks ago, President Trump signed a historic tax reform bill into law. Some, not really knowing what was in the bill and people who were determined to find fault with it, were let's just say a little skeptical at first. They wondered what this whole thing was about and who would actually benefit. But now the verdict is starting to come in. Many folks are pleasantly surprised, for the first time in a while, knowing that Congress and Washington, DC, actually have produced something that will make their lives better. They are appreciative because they are seeing the immediate consequences. In response, more than 100 companies have announced they will give wage increases, they will increase their charitable contributions, and they will give bonuses to their employees. One million Americans are receiving money they previously didn't have, thanks to passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

But it is not just about bonuses, of course. We expect that once the IRS updates its withholding tables, wages will rise, too, take-home pay will go up, and hopefully people will see that in their paychecks in February. As my colleague the junior Senator from Ohio wrote last week, “With this tax reform, the proof will be in your paycheck.” Families can spend that extra money any way they wish, of course. That is the point. They can spend it on projects long delayed. They can spend it on their kids. They can give it as an allowance or some modest compensation for chores performed or apply it to their kids' future education, or people may just figure out they want to save for a rainy day. The number is pretty shocking as far as how many Americans are living paycheck to paycheck and cannot sustain a \$400 loss in income and make things work for them. So this will provide them, if they wish, a little bit of cushion for a rainy day. They can donate it to their house of

worship. They can help a neighbor or a friend who has fallen on hard times.

In some places, we are learning that families will enjoy lower utility rates based on what gas and electric companies are doing for their residential customers in light of their new tax savings. In places such as Michigan, Montana, Minnesota, Kansas, Kentucky, South Dakota, and Arizona, the utility regulators in those States are looking at the tax reduction of those investor-owned utilities and how that will calculate into the rate of return that they are guaranteed under the law. But it looks to me as if it will be good news for consumers, that lower heating bills will be the result during the chilly times of the year and lower air-conditioning costs and other electricity costs when spring and summer come around. So it is encouraging to see this sort of perhaps unexpected consequence of tax reform but one that will directly benefit consumers.

This is real, it is significant, and it is like priming our economic pump—a little push here and a pull there because of tax reform, and all of a sudden, the entire engine of the American economy is chugging along and will soon be running at full speed.

In Texas, you can hear the economy humming along healthily, and we should listen. We should listen to the voices of the job creators like one in New Braunfels, which is between Austin and San Antonio. It is called Rush Enterprises. Rush Enterprises specializes in commercial vehicles. It reported last month that it planned to give each of its 6,600 employees a \$1,000 bonus after President Trump signed the tax reform into law—\$1,000 each to 6,600 employees. The chief financial officer of Rush Enterprises talked about the additional savings the company would incur as a result of the reduction in its tax rate, which fell from 35 percent to 21 percent. He said:

You've got a choice. We could've kept it and stuffed it in the company bank account or coffers, or we can share it with the people. We chose to share it with the people because it's the right thing to do.

Well, I couldn't be prouder of that demonstration of the great Texas spirit—employers paying it forward.

This gentleman went on to say that his company believes tax reform will be beneficial not only for his office and his employees but also for his community and for overall economic growth. To him, it is about the bigger picture.

New Braunfels, though, isn't the only place where companies are paying it forward. A telecom giant, AT&T, headquartered in Dallas, TX, and two prominent airlines—American Airlines and Southwest Airlines—have responded in similar fashion, offering large bonuses to hundreds of thousands of their employees and promising to make significant capital investments in the future and update their fleet of aircraft—all with the savings they will incur as a result of this Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Meanwhile, a restaurant company that owns a chain of popular steakhouses in Texas and elsewhere has announced it will use its savings from lower rates—about \$70 million—to improve customer service and to provide additional benefits to its employees. The restaurants will be spending a significant amount of money to make sure the dining experience is more worthwhile, hopefully providing not only jobs to the people who prepare the food but those who serve it and the vendors who sell it. Not only will this legislation have the effect of improving a waiter's and waitress' salary, but I think this demonstrates once again how the impact of tax reform is far-reaching, perhaps in ways we really didn't necessarily think about. But this is what happens when people get to keep more of the money they earn. They spend it in a way that improves their quality of life and improves their economic security.

In Texas, our economy hopefully will continue its steady ascent. In its annual economic freedom index, an organization called the Fraser Institute just ranked Texas as No. 2 in the country. I am not too happy about that. We don't like being No. 2 in anything. But we have been in the top five of this list for 11 straight years, and it has been because of our lower taxes, our fiscally conservative approach to spending, and our commonsense approach to regulation that makes it easier for investors and entrepreneurs to succeed. When they succeed, that means more jobs are created and people can do the work that provides them the means to support their family and improve their quality of life. We call that the Texas model. Although it is not particularly unique, you would think it would be common sense. But as they say, here in Washington, DC, common sense is not all that common.

Nationally, the situation is looking up, too, in part because the Trump administration shares this Texas approach. The U.S. economy added 2 million jobs in 2017, and unemployment is at a 17-year low. Consumer confidence is at an alltime high since it was first recorded—I believe it was about 16 years ago. Over the last two quarters, the economy has grown by more than 3 percent. That is up from roughly 1.9 percent during the previous administration. People are excited to see the economy continue to improve in 2018 thanks to tax cuts and other regulatory reform and a government that is no longer hostile to private business and job creation.

I am glad to hear how many positive steps have been taken over the past few weeks in response to tax reform, but it is early. As I pointed out, it has only been a couple of weeks. I look forward to hearing many more such stories in the days ahead.

I intend to spend this next year, when I travel around the State of Texas, looking for the small businesses and individuals who benefit from this

important piece of historic legislation. I look forward to coming back to the floor of the Senate to continue to share the stories of this success. Letting people keep more of what they earn, having more take-home pay, improving their standard of living, and making the United States more competitive in the global economy—rather than seeing businesses and investment move overseas, let's see that come back home, which I think we will see in droves, and the American people will be better off for it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of William L. Campbell, Jr., of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee.

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

STOP ENABLING SEX TRAFFICKERS ACT

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, every day in America—the greatest Nation in the history of the world—children, young women, and teenagers are sold for sex. That is not a proud fact about America, but it is the stark reality. Every day in America, young women, children, and teenagers are trafficked, in large part because they are advertised now on the internet, in the open, visibly, and obviously. Even though code words may be used and sometimes doctored photographs, they are sold for sex because the traffickers are able to do so using the internet. We are here to stop it. We are here today to stop the trafficking and, most importantly, to stop the advertising.

In support of a measure, known as the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act, SESTA, we have a strong bipartisan coalition. This bill is about as bipartisan as any bill is. I have worked on this legislation together with my colleague and friend, Senator ROB PORTMAN of Ohio, from the very begin-

ning. We have been joined in this effort by two Democrats and two Republicans—Senators MCCASKILL, HEITKAMP, CORNYN, and MCCAIN. We are passionate about this effort, and so are our colleagues who have joined us, because it is about those victims—those children, teenagers, and young women—who are sold for sex, who are trafficked on the internet. We want to give those victims a voice and a day in court, a right of action, a defense against this absolutely heinous, atrocious, inhumane crime. It is a crime and it can be prosecuted, but the victims deserve a day in court and a voice as well. That is the fundamental, core purpose of this legislation. It is about the victims.

We have been joined in this effort by advocates for those victims—sex trafficking survivors themselves and a diligent, bipartisan coalition of colleagues. In fact, more than 60 of our colleagues have joined this as cosponsors. We are now at a critical milestone for this bill. We have reached a point of momentum that makes this bill unstoppable if those survivors are to be heard and heeded, and I urge my colleagues to do exactly that. SESTA is really the product of stakeholder consensus. It has the support of every major human trafficking organization, of law enforcement, and of all of the major tech companies.

In essence, SESTA would clarify that section 230 of the Communications Decency Act was never intended to protect websites that facilitate sex trafficking, and it would ensure that those survivors get their day in court. It stands in stark contrast to a measure in the House of Representatives that has been approved by the relevant committee there, which would fail in that effort. Websites that knowingly facilitate sex trafficking should be afforded no protection under the Communications Decency Act. They should be given no harbor or implicit approval, which is what the legislation now does. The House bill, unfortunately, would fail to give those survivors and victims their day in court and the voice that they so desperately need.

Senator PORTMAN and I—and I am proud to be joined with him today on the floor—have championed this cause as a result of what we have seen and heard. In fact, in going back almost a decade, when I was attorney general for the State of Connecticut, I saw firsthand the way that websites can knowingly facilitate sex trafficking. I saw firsthand how challenging it was for law enforcement to develop cases against sex traffickers and employ anti-trafficking laws given the constraints on their resources, especially when those sex traffickers were able to use the internet to reach their customers. My experience in combating sex trafficking as attorney general at the State level led me, in my working with Senator PORTMAN, to co-launch and co-chair the Senate Caucus to End Human Trafficking so as to help find

solutions to this problem and others around the world whereby children and teenagers and others are sex-trafficked and victimized.

As the State attorney general, I concluded that facilitating sex trafficking must face repercussions. I was joined by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which reported and has since reported the numbers. For example, there has been an 846-percent increase in reports of suspected child sex trafficking from 2010 to 2015—a spike it found to be “directly correlated to the increased use of the internet to sell children for sex.” We have heard of some of those instances, of some of the histories and the stories of these young people.

In 2012, a 15-year-old girl ran away from home. Over the next 2 years, pimps trafficked her for sex through these ads. As a result, she was raped over 1,000 times while she was moved from one site to another with the aid of the internet. In 2010, another 15-year-old girl ran away from a residential program. A pimp began to traffic her for sex by posting online ads. As a result, she was raped 900 times over the next 2 years.

These two young women and a third mustered the courage to tell their stories and to bring a lawsuit against backpage.com, which is the website that has profited most prominently from these online ads. These advertisements graphically emphasized the survivors' and victims' youth and other characteristics in trafficking them for sex. Yet the courts, understandably and perhaps rightly, have held that backpage.com and these internet sites generally have no legal responsibility. The First Circuit Court of Appeals found that backpage.com was immune from civil liability because of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act.

Websites that facilitate sex trafficking unconscionably and intolerably are now immune from legal action by survivors. That is unacceptable in America. No matter how terrible the harm they cause, no matter how horrific the consequences to these young people, they are protected by a shield from moral and legal responsibility. In a sense, these women were victimized as much by backpage.com and the internet as they were by the pimps who more directly sold them.

Senator PORTMAN and I, through SESTA, would implement three key reforms: No. 1, allow victims of sex trafficking to seek justice against websites that knowingly facilitate their victimization; No. 2, clarify that it is illegal to knowingly facilitate a violation of the Federal sex trafficking laws; and No. 3, enable State law enforcement officials, not just the Federal Department of Justice, to take action against individuals or businesses that violate Federal sex trafficking laws.

If websites are not knowingly facilitating sex trafficking, they should have nothing to fear from the law. If

websites are doing their best to avoid facilitating sex trafficking, they have no worry about their liability. Yet, if they knowingly facilitate, they ought to face survivors and victims in court, and they ought to acknowledge and recognize their legal and moral responsibilities.

I want to be very blunt with my colleagues here about the House bill because my feeling is that we owe it to those survivors and victims to give them not just nice words and rhetoric but real rights. Congress must not only pass an online sex trafficking law; it must pass real sex trafficking internet protection. Unfortunately, the House Judiciary Committee recently passed legislation that fails to accomplish that goal.

My colleagues should not be fooled—the House bill is in no way an adequate alternative to SESTA. It is, unfortunately, completely insufficient in protecting survivors and victims and giving them that day in court and that voice they now lack. The difference between the House and Senate bills is stark and clear, like night and day. The Senate bill gives victims of trafficking their day in court. The House bill does not give a single survivor or victim access to justice. It fails to open the courthouse doors; it leaves them shut. In fact, it may even deny victims and survivors their right to file legal action. The Senate bill has the support of every major human trafficking organization, as well as of all of the major stakeholders. The House bill is supported by none—zero—no major group. In fact, 47 organizations and more than a dozen survivors and family members recently sent a letter that calls for the House bill, as it is presently written, to be rejected.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join this bipartisan group of more than 60 of us who are supporting SESTA to help pass this essential legislation as soon as possible. We owe it to those survivors and victims. We owe it to ourselves. We owe it to America.

I am proud to yield to my friend and colleague who has joined in this effort and has been such a steadfast champion, Senator PORTMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend and colleague, Senator BLUMENTHAL, for his commitment to this issue. We started this caucus to end trafficking 6 years ago, and during that time period there has been some significant progress made here in the Senate and the House. We have been able to pass legislation to help crack down on trafficking.

Unbelievably, in this century in this country, sex trafficking is increasing, not decreasing, despite our good efforts. We have increased the penalties on those who purchase sex from underage children. We have changed the dynamic of how the Federal Government and HHS look at this issue and these girls who get engaged in trafficking

and get trapped into the system and to treat them like the victims they are rather than as criminals.

We have done more to increase awareness of this issue. We have required for missing kids, which are probably the most vulnerable of all, that there be a photograph or another identifier, which, unbelievably, for the most part there was not prior to that. We have made some progress.

Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have written legislation with regard to Government contractors who overseas engage in human trafficking—and our tax dollars go for that. So we have made some progress, but it is still increasing.

Why? Senator BLUMENTHAL talked about it. The experts are unified on this. The main reason we see an uptick is because of the dark side of the internet. The Senator quoted the statistic earlier about an 850-percent increase in reports of sex trafficking over the last several years prior to 2015. The reason that was true was because we saw the emergence of these companies like backpage.com, which probably has about 75 percent of the commercial sex traffic on one site, and the ruthless efficiency of the internet getting engaged on this issue. So we have to address this issue.

Here is the tragic part of this. Not only are more and more lives being ruined and there are more and more heartbreaking stories, but it is because of a Federal law that provides immunity to these websites. So it comes right back here, right to these desks, right to this Congress, right to us as legislators to fix this problem, not to try to smooth it over but to actually fix the problem, which is that some of these online trafficking sites are immune from prosecution because of a Federal law. It was a well-intended law that was written 21 years ago, I think. It is the Communications Decency Act. Ironically, it was put in place to make it a crime to send pornography to kids online, but it has been twisted and used by these trafficking sites to provide them the ability to say: You can't touch us; you can't go after us. That is so because part of what the law says in trying to promote the internet is that if you post somebody else's material on your site, you are not liable. All we are saying is that if you know this involved trafficking—and Senator BLUMENTHAL talked about his experience as a prosecutor; this is a high bar, a known standard—then you can't get away with this. The standard we use, by the way, for Federal trafficking is the Federal law. So we allow victims to have their day in court, but they can't get it now.

The stories are really sad. Let me tell you one. We spent 18 months investigating this in the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and what we learned was truly tragic. You had girls who were trafficked on these sites. In one case a mom testified that her daughter had gone missing for about 10 weeks, as I recall—missing.

This is a 14-year-old girl. What would you do as a parent if your daughter was missing for 10 weeks? You would go crazy. She tried everything, and someone finally told her: There is this website called backpage.com; you might want to check it out.

She did, and she was aghast at what she saw, but she was relieved by one thing. She saw a photograph of her daughter, knowing, then, that she was still alive. So she picked up the phone and called backpage.com and said: I just saw my daughter. She has been missing for 10 weeks. I saw her on your website. Thank you for taking down that ad that is trying to sell my daughter for sex online. This is my daughter. She is underage.

Do you know what the backpage operator said at the other end of the line, according to this mom? They said: Did you pay for the ad, ma'am? She said: No, I didn't pay for the ad. This is my daughter. They said: Well, we can't take down the ad. We can't take down the ad.

What kind of evil is behind that kind of a business practice? Well, what we learned, as we increasingly dug into this issue, is that it is all about profit, and you can imagine this is a very profitable business. Profits came first, to the point that people would place ads with backpage that indicated that it was for an underage girl, and backpage would then get to the purchaser of the ad and say: You know what, we need to change your ad a little bit. You need to edit out this word "schoolgirl" or "cheerleader" or "Lolita," referring to a novel about an underage girl. So they knew these ads were being run by people who were advertising underage girls, and they not only ran the ads but they sanitized the ads first.

That just shouldn't happen in this country. It shouldn't happen anywhere in the world, but certainly not with a Federal law providing protections for organizations like that.

That is all we are saying. We want Congress to pass a law that says that if you engage knowingly in facilitating this kind of activity, you are subject to liability. You have to be held to account. Is that too much to ask?

Senator BLUMENTHAL talked about it as a former prosecutor. We allow State prosecutors to go after these sites, which they cannot now. They have to use the Federal standard. So we are not trying to create a whole new area of law. It is a Federal standard that has been passed by this body.

When these victims go to court, they are rebuffed: Sorry, ma'am. In one court last August, a Sacramento judge basically invited our legislation. He said to Congress: The way that law reads, even somebody who exploits women and children online has immunity. Congress, this is your job.

So that is all this legislation does. Senator BLUMENTHAL talked about the House legislation. There was strong House legislation that was introduced

that still bears that same H.R. number. Then it was changed in the Judiciary Committee. Look, I am glad that there is more awareness and consciousness about this issue and that both the House and Senate want to act, but let's not water this legislation down. Let's not take away this core element of our legislation that simply says that under the Communications Decency Act, we should have the opportunity to allow people to sue and allow prosecutors to go after these evil websites.

We can set up new causes of action. That is fine. We can do more things as we have done in this body. As I said, over the last 5 or 6 years, we passed a number of important bills to try to raise the consciousness and to try to help on this issue, but if we don't deal with this internet part, we will continue to see an increase, which is a stain on our national character—that at this time in our Nation's history, we are seeing an increase in people being sold for sex online, often underage.

Another story came not from testimony before the permanent subcommittee where we spent 18 months studying this, but it came before the Commerce Committee, and Senator BLUMENTHAL was there for part of this. This woman came forward. By the way, you could have heard a pin drop in that room when she talked about her 16-year-old daughter who was sold on backpage.com and was sold to a man who murdered her on Christmas Eve of 2016. This is what this mom said: My daughter never should have been on that site; that should never be allowed. She is right. It should never be allowed. How can we allow that to happen?

So Senator BLUMENTHAL and I introduced this legislation. We had 24 cosponsors almost right away, and it was bipartisan from the start. This is not a political or partisan issue. As of yesterday, I think we had 64 cosponsors. These are thoughtful Members, including the Presiding Officer today, who looked at this legislation. They have heard the arguments from both sides. The other side of the argument is from the tech community, some of whom are supporting our legislation, some of whom are not. But for the people in technology who are concerned about this, I just have to state: I don't get it. This is very narrowly crafted for this issue. We are not trying to affect the freedom of the internet—just the opposite.

If you don't start cracking down on this obvious crime against humanity, which is what I believe trafficking is, I think we are going to see much broader legislation to deal with the internet. This just says: If you are violating a Federal law on trafficking and you are doing it knowingly, you are facilitating it, you are assisting it, then you have to be held liable and held to account.

In fact, we keep in the law a Good Samaritan provision that says if a website wants to clean up its site, it is

protected. The good guys should be protected. We want them to clean up their site. We want to be sure that we continue to have freedom of the internet, but we don't want to allow—nor do I think it was ever intended in this law to allow—criminal activity to occur that affects our children and our constituents over the internet without any sense of accountability or responsibility. It is narrowly crafted. It is focused on a real issue that affects real people.

On Friday I was back home in Ohio, and I was at a drug treatment center. I had an opportunity to meet some of those who are recovering addicts. As often happens when I am in those kinds of settings, it turns to what kind of treatment options are out there for trauma. Why? Because there is a link between opioids—particularly heroin and fentanyl—and trafficking. This is what has been told to me many times by some of these women, sometimes underage: Senator, trafficking has moved from the street corner to the iPhone, from the street corner to the cell phone. That is a reality.

I met a woman on Friday who was going through treatment, and part of it is to treat the trauma that is associated with this. Drug treatment is one thing, but the trauma associated with sex trafficking, repeated rapes is a course that is a deeper and even more difficult road to recovery. I believe she will recover. She has a great attitude. She gets it. She is going to have to focus on it and dedicate herself to it.

I will just tell you that this is a real issue in our communities today. It is affecting every single State in this body, and we cannot continue to ignore the reality that while the internet has brought a lot of good things to us and the internet has helped our economy to grow, there is a dark side and this dark side of the internet is why we think it is so important for us to address this issue and address it now so that the next mom who is out there right now wondering, "Where is my daughter? She has gone missing," will not find that she has been advertised online to multiple men, that her life is forever changed, and that she will never achieve her God-given potential in life because of the trauma she has experienced. That is happening right now today.

We have to pass this legislation. It will help. I am convinced it will help. It will help to avoid the reality today, which is that these websites in your communities don't care and they are not going to care until we make them accountable.

This month is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month—January. President Trump just wrote a beautiful proclamation about it. It was a call to action. President Obama did previously. Thursday is the day in which a lot of the advocates will be here in town talking about this issue. I just urge my colleagues and their staff, if they are listening today,

please sign up on this legislation if you haven't already. To our leadership, let's get this to the floor for a vote. This should not be an issue that we drag out. Let's deal with it. We spent years studying this. We know what the issue is. We know what the problem is. Then, to my House colleagues, let's work together to actually solve this problem.

For those in the tech community who continue to oppose this legislation, I ask you to look into your hearts and think about the impact this is having on families all across the country. Yes, we all want a better world, and that is part of what many of these internet companies are professing to want, and many of them, by the way, have spent considerable resources in fighting trafficking. But if you don't get at this issue—it has moved from the street corner to the smartphone. If you don't get at this issue, I don't believe we will see the progress that all of us desire.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE).
The Senator from South Dakota.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the beginning of a new session of Congress provides a good moment to look back at the previous year and take stock of the challenges ahead, and today what I would like to do is just take a few minutes to talk about the national security challenges facing our country and the importance of equipping our military to meet them.

By the end of the Obama administration, our military was facing a serious readiness shortfall. The Obama administration's failure to prioritize defense had left our armed services with manpower deficits and delayed the acquisition of 21st century weapons and equipment. Military effectiveness had been compromised by a culture of micro-management in the Obama administration that seriously hampered the ability of troops and commanders to respond to conditions on the ground in a timely fashion, but within days of his inauguration, President Trump made clear that all this was going to change.

You can look at the situation we faced in the Middle East. The timeframe I am referring to right here, the mound of ground that is held by ISIS, that is in January of 2017.

Well, just a week after his inauguration, President Trump issued a Presidential memorandum on rebuilding the military. He directed a review of our military's readiness, and he set out an action plan to address manpower shortfalls, maintenance backlogs, acquisition costs and delays, and other drains on our military capabilities. President Trump also acted to free up military commanders to make decisions and to respond to conditions on the ground.

The fruits of his commitment to rebuilding our military and trusting our military leaders are already evident, most notably in the significant gains made against ISIS in 2017.

If you look at the chart I just showed, in January of 2017, and then you look at December of 2017, in terms of territory held, ISIS has been routed. In the first 11 months of the Trump administration, over 15,000 square miles were liberated from ISIS control, exceeding the total area freed in the preceding 2½ years. ISIS has lost over 98 percent of the territory it once held, and it hasn't gained any back.

Just a month ago, Iraqi Prime Minister al-Abadi declared his country "fully liberated" from ISIS. In Syria, ISIS has lost control of its strongholds and now only remains in small pockets of the country.

All told, in the last year, more than 5.3 million people have been freed from the brutal grip of ISIS—more than double the previous gains. Families who have spent years fearing for their lives are seeing a chance for stability, peace, and order. If this year has shown us anything, it is that we can trust our military to do its job and deliver results.

President Trump delegated tactical authority and permitted our military to take action when action was needed, and military leaders credit this tactical authority for significant gains made on the ground.

The swift rise of ISIS was enabled, in part, by the Obama administration's shortsighted desire to withdraw from the fight against terrorism in the Middle East. The withdrawal of U.S. troops—on a timeline the Obama administration announced to our enemies—left a power vacuum in the region, and ISIS stepped in to fill the void. This is a mistake we cannot repeat.

While we have made tremendous strides against ISIS in the last year, we cannot simply take these wins and let our guard down. We know ISIS and other dark actors can operate in the shadows of the internet and social media, using their extensive networks to recruit and influence other would-be attackers in the United States and around the world.

As chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, which shares jurisdiction over some of these matters, I am committed to looking at what steps we can take to thwart terrorist recruitment and planning efforts and to keep America safe. Next week, I am holding a Commerce Committee hearing on what social media companies can do in this fight.

While we focus on combating terrorism, we cannot forget the conventional threats faced by our Nation and our allies. I mentioned gains against ISIS and Syria, but there remains the alarming challenge of growing Iranian influence there. Syria provides a convenient land bridge to connect Iran with Hezbollah in Lebanon, which is well on its way to being a proxy for the Iranian Army.

Of course, we continue to see the deadly consequences of Iran's continued smuggling of arms to Houthi

rebels. Iran is a serious threat to stability in the Middle East and to our allies there, and we need to keep that in mind as we consider the failed Iran nuclear deal and the ongoing protests in Iran.

We also have to stay focused on the threat posed by North Korea. South and North Korea reestablished communications and just met to discuss the upcoming winter Olympics in South Korea. They announced, in addition to North Korea sending a delegation to the winter games, the two countries have agreed to hold military talks, but North Korea said it will not discuss its nuclear program at this time.

I think North Korea's nuclear program has to be addressed as a condition of any lasting peace, and the United States should lead its allies in making that crystal clear. While the talks are a notable development after 2 years of no communication between the two countries, we obviously need to be wary of North Korea's motives. We will have to see what actions follow and if the talks lead to any substantive steps by North Korea to dismantle its nuclear program.

President Trump and Ambassador Haley have made it clear that North Korea must abandon its dangerous ambitions, and increased sanctions are providing additional pressure. We should make no concessions without fundamental progress. Of course, this will require cooperation from China to help exert pressure on North Korea and uphold U.N. resolutions.

China has sought to tip the regional balance in its favor by objecting to the installation of missile defense platforms that would defend the United States and our allies against North Korean missiles. Meanwhile, it has been simultaneously expanding its own military, continuing to develop islands in international waters and exercising economic coercion.

President Trump's national security strategy correctly acknowledges both China and Russia as challengers to American influence, interests, security, and prosperity.

I have spoken on the Senate floor more than once to denounce Russia's continued annexation of Crimea, its subversion of Ukrainian sovereignty, and its efforts to undermine NATO, not to mention its continued denial of attempting to meddle with our election. Both the conventional challenges that our Nation continues to face and the persistent threat of radical terrorism underscore the perennial need to ensure that our military is the best prepared and the best equipped fighting force in the world.

I have said it before, and I will say it again. If we don't get national security right, the rest of what we do here is just conversation. We have to be able to defend our country and our allies.

Yes, investing in our national security and restoring our military, especially after years of neglect, will come at a cost, but as Army Chief of Staff

GEN Mark Milley has said, "The only thing more expensive than deterrence is actually fighting a war, and the only thing more expensive than fighting a war is fighting one and losing one."

In the next few weeks, the Senate will have a chance to vote to increase funding for our troops and to take real steps to restore our military readiness. I hope my colleagues across the aisle will work with us. If there is any issue—any issue—in this Chamber that should be bipartisan, it is this one. It is not an exaggeration to say the security of our Nation, our ability to live as a free people, depends upon the strength of our military. It is time to make sure our military men and women have the resources they need to defend our Nation.

RECESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:25 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BURR).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer, the Senator from North Carolina.

I ask unanimous consent to speak for 2 minutes on the nominees on whom we are about to vote.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, on December 1, 2016, Judge Todd Campbell stepped down as a district court judge for the Middle District of Tennessee. On April 15, 2017, Judge Kevin Sharp stepped down, creating a second vacancy in the Middle District. Those two vacancies have resulted in increased caseloads for the only two remaining full-time Federal district court judges, Waverly Crenshaw and Aleta Trauger.

Things are almost as bad in Tennessee's Western District, where we have two vacancies. Fortunately, help is on the way. In July of last year, President Trump nominated Chip Campbell to serve in Tennessee's Middle District and Tommy Parker to serve in the Western District. I was pleased to see the President select such qualified individuals, and I thank him and his counsel, Don McGahn, for working with us throughout this process. I was equally pleased to see the Senate Judiciary Committee approve both nominations by voice vote last October. And it is easy to see why Tennesseans are excited about these nominees, too.

Chip Campbell is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and the University of Alabama School of Law. Before attending law school, Mr. Campbell

served as a naval flight officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. He began his career in private practice with Maynard, Cooper & Gale in Birmingham, before moving and joining the Nashville firm of Riley, Warnock & Jacobson. Today he is a partner at Frost Brown Todd in Nashville, where he chairs the competition law section of the business litigation practice group.

Tommy Parker received his undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina before going to law school at Vanderbilt. Upon graduation, he joined the Memphis law firm of Waring Cox. In 1995, Mr. Parker left his position with the firm to serve as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Western District of Tennessee. Today he is a partner at Baker Donelson in Memphis.

I want to note that President Trump has also made two other nominations to fill the remaining vacancies in the Middle District—Eli Richardson—and in the Western District—State Senator Mark Norris—and I encourage the Senate to act quickly on their nominations. But today's votes are a good start.

Chip Campbell and Tommy Parker will be assets to the Federal bench, and Tennessee is fortunate to have such well-qualified nominees. These are men of good character and good temperament, and today I encourage my colleagues to support their nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). Under the previous order, all postcloture time is considered expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Campbell nomination?

Mr. ALEXANDER. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 3 Ex.]

YEAS—97

Alexander	Cochran	Flake
Baldwin	Collins	Gardner
Barrasso	Coons	Gillibrand
Bennet	Corker	Graham
Blumenthal	Cornyn	Grassley
Blunt	Cortez Masto	Harris
Booker	Cotton	Hassan
Boozman	Crapo	Hatch
Brown	Daines	Heinrich
Burr	Donnelly	Heitkamp
Cantwell	Duckworth	Heller
Capito	Durbin	Hirono
Cardin	Enzi	Hoeven
Carper	Ernst	Inhofe
Casey	Feinstein	Johnson
Cassidy	Fischer	Jones

Kaine	Nelson	Smith
Kennedy	Paul	Stabenow
King	Perdue	Sullivan
Klobuchar	Peters	Tester
Lankford	Portman	Thune
Leahy	Reed	Tillis
Lee	Risch	Toomey
Manchin	Roberts	Udall
Markey	Rounds	Van Hollen
McCaskill	Rubio	Warner
McConnell	Sanders	Warren
Menendez	Sasse	Whitehouse
Merkley	Schatz	Wicker
Moran	Schumer	Wyden
Murkowski	Scott	Young
Murphy	Shaheen	
Murray	Shelby	

NOT VOTING—3

Cruz Isakson McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Thomas Lee Robinson Parker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, John Barrasso, John Thune, Roger F. Wicker, James M. Inhofe, Johnny Isakson, Mike Crapo, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Michael B. Enzi, James Lankford, Lindsey Graham, Pat Roberts, Todd Young.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Thomas Lee Robinson Parker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 96, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Ex.]

YEAS—96

Alexander	Blunt	Cantwell
Baldwin	Booker	Capito
Barrasso	Boozman	Cardin
Bennet	Brown	Carper
Blumenthal	Burr	Casey

Cassidy	Heller	Reed
Cochran	Hoeven	Risch
Collins	Inhofe	Roberts
Coons	Johnson	Rounds
Corker	Jones	Rubio
Cornyn	Kaine	Sanders
Cortez Masto	Kennedy	Sasse
Cotton	King	Schatz
Crapo	Klobuchar	Schumer
Daines	Lankford	Scott
Donnelly	Leahy	Shaheen
Duckworth	Lee	Shelby
Durbin	Manchin	Smith
Enzi	Markey	Stabenow
Ernst	McCaskill	Sullivan
Feinstein	McConnell	Tester
Fischer	Menendez	Thune
Flake	Merkley	Tillis
Gardner	Moran	Toomey
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Udall
Graham	Murphy	Van Hollen
Grassley	Murray	Warner
Harris	Nelson	Warren
Hassan	Paul	Whitehouse
Hatch	Perdue	Wicker
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden
Heitkamp	Portman	Young

NAYS—1

Hirono
NOT VOTING—3

Cruz Isakson McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 96, the nays are 1. The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Thomas Lee Robinson Parker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS CAMPBELL

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a trio of excellent staffers, all of whom served with distinction on the Senate Finance Committee for a number of years and who recently left the committee to pursue other ventures.

First, Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about Chris Campbell, a longtime friend and trusted adviser, who until recently served as the Republican staff director on the committee. Last summer, he was nominated and confirmed to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Financial Institutions.

I have known Chris for more than 17 years, and I cannot overstate his importance and contributions to my years of work here in the Senate. Chris joined my campaign for President back in 2000, where I immediately recognized his talent and leadership abilities and appointed him to be my national field director, although he was relatively young and inexperienced at the time. Needless to say, I don't blame Chris for how that particular campaign turned out. In fact, that same year, I asked him to serve as director for my Senate reelection campaign, which thankfully met with much better results. After that, he came to Washington to serve on my staff on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I have long urged my staffers to get as much education as possible to enhance their understanding and gain new perspectives. I nagged Chris about this during my Presidential campaign. Eventually, after working on my staff for a few years, he wanted to upgrade his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California at Santa Barbara with an MBA from the Thunderbird School of Global Management.

A short time after receiving his MBA and a brief stint in the private sector, Chris desired to return to public service, and when he returned to Washington, I hired him back without hesitation and asked him to serve as my legislative director, a post he held until 2011 when I took over as the lead Republican on the Finance Committee and appointed him to be the staff director.

During his time on the committee staff, Chris quarterbacked every major effort we undertook. This includes successes like the approval of free-trade agreements, the bipartisan renewal of trade promotion authority and the modernization of U.S. trade laws, the repeal and replacement of the Medicare sustainable growth rate, and the long-term funding of the Federal highway trust fund, just to name a few.

Of course, his work on the long-term tax reform effort was invaluable. We began our work on tax reform right out of the gate in 2011 and worked with Chairman Baucus and others to drive it forward. Chris was a key part of all of the work we did over the years to advance tax reform. While his move to Treasury came just before the final stages of that effort, I was fortunately able to benefit from his continued advice and counsel as we moved closer to and eventually crossed the finish line.

Chris is a shrewd but effective negotiator and a brilliant legislative strategist. Congressional Quarterly named him one of the seven most influential non-elected people working in Congress, and Roll Call put him on its list of the 50 most influential staffers on Capitol Hill for 7 straight years. Clearly, I am not the only one who recognizes his abilities. I know the other members of the Finance Committee—on both sides of the aisle—have also acknowledged and benefited from his years of work.

Still, even with all of his accomplishments, what stands out most to me about Chris Campbell is his life story. He is a great example of how hard work and education can help a person become much more than what some statistician might predict. Chris grew up in Hemet, CA, as one of six children who struggled—and that is putting it lightly—to make ends meet. He didn't grow up with family connections or powerful benefactors, but thanks to his diligence and determination and no shortage of natural ability, he became one of the most effective and influential staffers on Capitol Hill, and he now serves in a key leadership role in the administration.

While it pained me to see him head off to Treasury, I have been comforted to know that the President knows how to pick the best people and that the Department of the Treasury is being well served.

I personally want to thank Chris for his years in working with me, for his candid and thoughtful advice, and for his commitment to public service. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors, which I am quite sure will be just as successful as his time here.

TRIBUTE TO BECKY SHIPP

Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about another former staffer, Becky Shipp, who also left the Finance Committee staff a few months ago to pursue another venture.

While I have known Becky for more years than either she or I would like to count, I can tell you that she served tirelessly on the Senate Finance Committee for more than 10 years. She saw chairmen come and go and was an institution here in her own right.

In my time on the Hill, I have come to know many different staffers, all of whom got involved in the government for all types of well-meaning and patriotic reasons. They each have some expertise, some interest, and some motivation that helps them get through the hard times that staff encounter with the stressful conditions and the below-market pay.

I have long said that Senators and staff take on sacred obligations when we come to work here, and I cannot think of many who have taken that sacred obligation to heart more than Becky Shipp. She spent her time in Congress working on welfare and human resource issues. Her dedication and zealotry in defending the less fortunate should serve as an example to all of us.

While issues surrounding child welfare, child and family services, and foster care programs are often overlooked, anyone in Washington who knows anything about these issues knows that Becky has played a singular role in the creation and preservation of the safety net we now have in place. Too often, welfare issues become bitterly partisan, but during Becky's time here, she always strove to find common ground no matter the personal sacrifice.

Her time on the Hill was extremely productive and impacted far more children and families than most any of us could probably ever count. Still, it was not without moments that, when looking back, seemed pretty lighthearted. One such moment came just a few years ago after many in Congress had become aware of the fact that welfare funds distributed through electronic bank transfers had been used by some to purchase alcohol, food, or other illicit items from strip clubs and other less than savory establishments. Becky quietly began developing a proposal to prevent this type of abuse. Eventually, her idea gained more traction than she thought it would initially.

Once members of the Finance Committee and in the House began to realize the nature of this problem, her proposal caught on like wildfire. The problem was that the Social Security Act did not have a definition for these establishments. After quite a bit of wrangling and putting herself in the shoes of some of the more seedy clientele and business owners, Becky developed a definition, more or less, from scratch. Specifically, the bill, now a Federal statute, prohibited the distribution of Federal welfare funds at "any retail establishment which provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment." Now, many have chuckled at the specificity of that definition and at the fact that someone, somewhere had to come up with and write down that type of legal terminology, but Becky was not playing a joke or trying to be facetious; she was addressing a legitimate concern. That story, to me, epitomizes the type of person Becky Shipp is and the type of congressional staffer she was when she worked in the Senate.

I am quite certain that, even in her new endeavors, Becky will remain committed to promoting the same type of no-nonsense, proper governance, with an equal eye toward helping those in need to find meaningful work, care, and assistance. While Becky's work ethic, persistence, and friendliness have already been missed on the Finance Committee, I am quite certain that she will continue to do many great things and help many more people.

I personally thank Becky for her years of service and for all that she has done for me, for others in the Senate, and for those in our country who have been in need of a helping hand.

TRIBUTE TO PRESTON RUTLEDGE

Finally, Mr. President, I want to say a few words about Preston Rutledge, my former tax counsel who was recently nominated and confirmed to serve as Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Employee Benefits Security Administration.

Preston began his career in public service as a teenager when he worked in the national forests. Later, he served honorably as an officer in the U.S. Navy. After graduating from law school, he was a law clerk on the Fifth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals and spent more than a decade working at the IRS, focusing on tax-exempt organizations and employee benefits.

He came to the Finance Committee about 7 years ago. During that time, he worked on a number of issues that many people, quite frankly, consider to be tedious or mundane, but Preston is an expert on these issues, and he has always taken great pleasure in the issues and work before him.

As a staffer, Preston was, more than anything, committed to advancing reforms to our Nation's pension and savings programs in order to ensure a stable and reliable retirement savings system. Toward that end, he was a lead

staffer in the drafting and passage of key pieces of pension and savings legislation, including the Retirement Enhancement and Savings Act, which provided a number of key reforms to our Nation's retirement savings system, and the ABLE Act, which provided savings enhancements for children with disabilities and their families.

Preston's knowledge of tax policy and ERISA issues is unsurpassed. I was not the only one to benefit from and rely upon his expertise. Indeed, the entire Finance Committee relied on Preston whenever these types of issues came up because, once again, there just aren't many people in Washington with that particular focus and expertise.

I wish Preston good luck in his new position at the Labor Department and thank him for the work he performed on the committee. I am confident his expertise, as well as his open-minded and inclusive approach, will help improve the situations of workers and families across the country. I can think of no one more capable to serve in this important capacity.

As you can see, I have been fortunate to have worked with some excellent staffers in recent years—well, really throughout my whole service in the Senate. That has been true of my entire time at the Senate.

Of course, I have many great staffers still working in the Senate, both in the Finance Committee and in my personal office. I am grateful for each of them as well. I am very fortunate to have them with me as we have some important work ahead of us.

The Finance Committee's current workload is, quite honestly, mind-boggling. There is much to do over the next several months. I will have more to say on that in the coming days. For now, I will simply say, I look forward to working with my colleagues and staff on the vitally important tasks that lie ahead.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DACA

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of nearly 800,000 Dreamers, young people who were brought to this country as children who today are living in fear and uncertainty. As a result of the Trump administration's decision to end the DACA Program, these young people are at risk of losing their legal status and, in fact, face deportation from the only home that most of them have ever known, and that home is the United States of America.

This is one of the great moral issues of our time, and it is an issue that

must be dealt with now as part of the budget negotiations. It cannot be kicked down the road any longer. We must pass the Dream Act now as part of the current budget negotiations.

In the last 6 years since the DACA Program was established, these young people—again, people who were brought to this country as infants, in many cases—were finally able to breathe a sigh of relief. For the first time in their lives, they could walk the streets of this country without fear, without worrying about being arrested, without worrying about being deported. Think about what it means to live in this country every single day knowing that, at any moment, you could be arrested or deported. What DACA finally did is to give these 800,000 young people a legal status and a protection so they could go out and work, so they could go to school, and so they could serve in the U.S. military without fear.

As we all know, tragically, on September 5, 2017, President Trump announced the end of the DACA Program through Executive order. President Obama had established it through Executive order, and President Trump ended it through Executive order. In his announcement, President Trump noted:

I look forward to working with Republicans and Democrats in Congress to finally address all of these issues. As I have said before, we will resolve the DACA issue with heart and compassion, but through the lawful democratic process. It is now time for Congress to act.

That is Donald Trump.

The President was right. It is time for Congress to act. It is time for Congress to not kick the can down the road.

Our Republican President, Mr. Trump, told the Republican-led Congress to get to work on a DACA fix, and I say today to the Republican leadership: Let's do it. Let's do it now. That is what President Trump asked you to do. Listen to him, and let's do it—not next month, not in March, but right now—as part of the budget agreement.

People are working on this issue now. We can come to a consensus. We can pass the Dream Act if there is a political will to do it.

Let us also be very clear. Despite what some have said, this is an urgent matter that must be addressed now. Since President Trump rescinded the DACA Program in September, more than 15,000 Dreamers have already lost their DACA status and are now subject to deportation. Each day the Congress does not act, 122 people lose their DACA protections, and 851 people each and every week. This is a matter of urgency, and we have to act accordingly.

But I want to assure my Republican colleagues that not only is this the right thing to do from a moral perspective and from an economic perspective, but it is also exactly what the American people want. Nobody here is asking anybody in the Senate to rise up

and to be extraordinarily brave and courageous. Why don't you just do what the American people want us to do? No profiles in courage are needed now. Poll after poll has shown that the overwhelming majority of the American people want to provide legal status to the Dreamers and to protect them from deportation. From a political perspective, this is not a difficult decision.

A Washington Post-ABC poll from September 2017, a few months ago, found that 86 percent of Americans support allowing Dreamers to stay in the United States. So 86 percent of the American people support providing legal status to Dreamers. This is not a tough political decision.

Another recent poll conducted by Quinnipiac found that 77 percent of voters and 65 percent of Republicans support legislation to protect Dreamers and provide them an opportunity to work, to go to school, and to pursue a pathway to citizenship.

Another poll conducted by CNN last month found that by an 83-percent to 13-percent margin, Americans support efforts to allow Dreamers to remain in the United States instead of facing potential deportation. Only 15 percent believed that Dreamers should be deported.

Passing the Dream Act is also in our national security interests. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently noted:

The United States faces extraordinary security challenges that are placing growing pressure on our Armed Forces. That is why we need legislation that will provide a pathway to citizenship for those immigrants who, among other attributes, are serving or have served in the military, whether they are in America legally or were brought here illegally as children.

That is former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.

In addition, just last week three former Secretaries of Homeland Security wrote to House and Senate leadership expressing both their strong support for a DACA fix and for the urgency of acting now. Secretaries Chertoff, Napolitano, and Johnson warned of the need for Congress to act immediately and emphasized how the agency needs time to implement a new program. Without it, they caution that the delay will sow uncertainty in the business community and drive undocumented individuals further into the shadows, with immediate deportation looming for tens of thousands every single month.

Let us be very clear that when we talk about the DACA Program and when we talk about these young people receiving legal status, these young people are vetted, they pay a fee, and the vast majority of them are now at jobs important to our economy. They are in school or they are in the military. In order to get DACA status, they could not be convicted of a felony or a significant misdemeanor or pose a threat to national security or public safety. As almost everybody recognizes, these

are fine young people whom we should be very proud of and should not be talking about deporting them.

DACA gave these young people a shot at the American dream, and having been given that opportunity, they seized it and they are excelling and contributing to our country—to their country—in so many ways. With 91 percent of DACA recipients in the workforce, they play an important role in our economy. Many hundreds of Dreamers have taken up the call to serve in our Armed Forces. Can my colleagues imagine a young Dreamer now serving in the Armed Forces, putting his or her life on the line to defend this country, and then reading about Members of Congress who think we should deport them? How outrageous is that?

Furthermore, there are some 20,000 DACA recipients who are currently teaching in our schools. We desperately need good teachers, and 20,000 DACA recipients are doing just that.

Yet, because of President Trump's cruel decision to rescind the DACA Program, as well as the Republican-controlled Congress's failure to act, these young people's lives and livelihoods have been thrown into chaos and uncertainty.

It is our job to enact a legislative fix now. The President has called for a fix. The vast majority of the people of this country want to see a fix. A fix is important to our national security. It is the right thing to do. Let us do it.

I am, however, very concerned that President Trump is using the 800,000 Dreamers as a bargaining chip to force the taxpayers of this country to pay for an \$18 billion wall. Now, some may remember that during his campaign for President, Donald Trump told the American people that it was the Mexican Government that would be paying for the wall. Well, it turns out that it didn't quite work out that way, and now it is the taxpayers of this country who are supposed to pay for a wall.

Let me be as clear as I can be. We cannot and we must not hold the lives of 800,000 young Dreamers hostage in order to fund a wall that the vast majority of the American people oppose. We cannot and we must not allow Donald Trump to shut down the government to fund this wall, but that, it appears, may very well be—for whatever reason—what Donald Trump wants.

Let me remind my colleagues what Donald Trump said last August at a rally in Arizona, the Presiding Officer's home State: "Believe me, if we have to close down our government, we're building that wall." August 22, 2017, Donald J. Trump.

Now, I do not know why Donald Trump may be pushing for a government shutdown. Maybe he thinks it will work well for him or work well for the Republican Party politically. I have no idea, but I do know that the idea of a government shutdown is a very bad idea. Maybe Republicans will gain from it, maybe Democrats will politically gain from it. I do not have a

clue. What I do know is, the American people will lose from a government shutdown, and, in a bipartisan manner, we must do everything we can to prevent that shutdown.

A shutdown would harm tens of millions of Americans who would be unable to access vital government services; it would disrupt the lives of hundreds of thousands, or more, Federal employees who depend upon a check to provide for their families; and, in fact, it would endanger members of the U.S. military who are putting their lives on the line to defend our country.

The U.S. Congress has a responsibility to the American people to prevent a government shutdown and to work in a bipartisan manner to reach a budget agreement that is fair and that addresses the very serious problems facing not only DACA recipients but the working people of our country.

So I say to my Republican colleagues, you control the White House, you control the U.S. House, and you control the U.S. Senate. You have a responsibility to govern.

For President Trump and the Republican leadership to allow DACA to expire without a new program in place is not only a failure to govern, it is an act of extraordinary cruelty.

We know President Trump wants to build a wall, I guess somewhat like the Great Wall of China. The problem is, building walls may have made sense in the 14th century, but I would inform the President that technology has somewhat changed since then, and our job is to provide strong border security in the most cost-effective way we can, and that way is not building a wall. Ironically, while the President wants to spend \$18 billion to build a wall, he is taking money away from other far more important and effective border security measures.

Let me quote from an article that appeared in today's New York Times:

The Trump administration would cut or delay funding for border surveillance, radar technology, patrol boats and customs agents in its upcoming spending plan to curb illegal immigration—all proven security measures that officials and experts have said are more effective than building a wall along the Mexican border.

The wall also has become a bargaining chip in negotiations with Congress as lawmakers seek to prevent nearly 800,000 young undocumented immigrants from being deported.

But security experts said the president's focus on a border wall ignores the constantly evolving nature of terrorism immigration and drug trafficking.

In other words, if we want strong border security, if we want to keep people out of this country who should not be coming into this country, if we want to keep drugs out of this country, building a wall is not the most cost-effective way. It may have been a great idea in the 14th century in China when they built their Great Wall, but it is not a great idea in 2018, in the United States of America.

So let me just conclude by saying, we are at a very important moment in his-

tory. If we do not do the right thing, if we do not do the moral thing, if we allow some 800,000 young people—people who have spent virtually their entire lives in this country, who know no other country, who see the United States of America as their home—if we betray them, if we take away their legal status, if we allow them to be deported, this will be a moral stain on this country that will never ever be wiped out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, for the past decade, health policy, unfortunately, has proven to be one of the most bitterly partisan issues. It doesn't have to be this way.

I want to take a few minutes to discuss some health-related issues that Congress left unfinished before the holidays: providing relief from the medical device tax, reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program, funding for community health centers, and doing more to address the opioid crisis. Each has strong bipartisan support and could provide help to our constituents now.

First, many of us, on both sides of the aisle, agree on the need to provide relief from the medical device tax, which went back into effect on January 1. The medical device tax is one of these issues that leaves most Hoosiers scratching their heads. First adopted as part of the Affordable Care Act, the device tax was one of the few issues Republicans and Democrats agreed needed to be fixed, and in 2015, with bipartisan support, President Obama enacted a 2-year suspension of the tax.

The argument was really pretty simple. The medical device tax was making it harder for innovative companies to invest in the research and development of new technologies, and, in the process, we were stifling job creation. If there was a question as to whether this was the case, the last 2 years provided evidence. When we agreed to suspend the tax in 2016 and 2017, manufacturers used that additional money to hire new workers, invest in research and technologies, and continue producing innovative, lifesaving products in the United States.

For example, Zimmer Biomet, headquartered in Warsaw, IN, my home State, used the money from the device tax suspension to invest in new innovation to improve musculoskeletal health across the world. They were also able to upgrade their manufacturing equipment and facilities. Perhaps more importantly, these investments not only supported existing jobs, but they also helped to create new jobs—new, good-paying jobs.

Yet, despite this evidence, despite this strong bipartisan support for repeal, and despite a wide-ranging package of changes to the Tax Code becoming law in recent days, Congress has failed to address the medical device

tax, which went back into place on January 1.

As we again discuss the policy priorities that were left unaddressed in 2017, I strongly urge my colleagues to work with me to quickly and meaningfully address the medical device tax. This would allow these innovative companies to make the long-term investments that not only lead to life-changing technologies but support thousands of high-paying jobs across the country, including in my home State of Indiana.

Another issue that has garnered bipartisan support is a healthcare program that covers millions of our children. We must reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program—also known as CHIP—that expired in September.

I have long supported the CHIP program. It provides health coverage for millions of kids, including nearly 115,000 children from Indiana. I am not alone in my support for this program. The fact is, CHIP has had strong bipartisan support for the past 20 years, and Democrats and Republicans in both the Senate and the House have shown they support a 5-year reauthorization of the program. That gives States the certainty they need to plan their budgets and provide high-quality care to these children.

Despite this shared commitment for the program and agreement on the need for a long-term reauthorization, we were only able to fund the program through March before Congress departed for the holidays. This short-term extension bought some time, but according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services—CMS—some States will start running out of money after January 19. This means families and States will very soon face the harmful consequences of congressional inaction.

Just last week, the Congressional Budget Office said that funding the CHIP program for the next 5 years will cost significantly less than previous estimates. This program is vital to our families and vital to our children. We should reauthorize the CHIP program right away.

Like the CHIP program, community health centers have enjoyed long bipartisan support for the high-quality care they provide to our families. Also, like CHIP, the funding for community health centers expired on September 30, leaving many health centers across Indiana worried about if they will have the resources they need to continue to serve Hoosiers.

We have the ability to work together now to ensure that our community health centers can continue to provide cost-effective, high-quality healthcare to people all across the country.

Finally, we have demonstrated a common desire to address the needs of the opioid and drug abuse crisis. It is a scourge. It took the lives of 63,000 people just in 2016—63,000 of our brothers and sisters, our husbands and wives, our sons and daughters. It is a heart-

break that is crushing the entire country.

I welcomed President Trump's declaration of a public health emergency, and both Republican and Democratic Senators have highlighted the need for Congress to do even more to help those struggling with addiction.

Like many other States, the opioid epidemic has been particularly devastating in underserved areas in Indiana that lack adequate treatment providers.

Senator MURKOWSKI and I have partnered on a bipartisan bill that would encourage addiction treatment professionals to serve in underserved areas by making addiction treatment facilities eligible for National Health Service Corps student loan repayment and forgiveness.

We can show our commitment to increasing access to treatment by reauthorizing the National Health Service Corps program, which expired in September. We also must recognize that a meaningful response to the opioid crisis will require robust and meaningful funding to help our communities as soon as possible.

I have often said that most people think Congress can do something to help make life better—to provide working parents with the peace of mind that their children can grow up healthy and to instill confidence in our communities so that they will have the tools they need to respond to this heart-breaking crisis. At the very least, Congress should not make this situation worse.

By failing to take action in 2017, medical device companies are once again paying a counterproductive tax that inhibits growth in Indiana.

On all of these issues—medical device taxes, our families and our children and this opioid crisis, community health centers—we can work together as Democrats, as Republicans, but more than either of those, as Americans to make sure that our families can get decent healthcare, to make sure that no one else dies because of this terrible opioid scourge we are dealing with. These are critically important issues. These are issues that know no political party, that know no special agenda. What we do know is that we need this Congress, this Senate, to deal with them now.

Mr. President, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from North Dakota.

CONGRATULATING THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY BISON FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE FCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I will be submitting a resolution in the U.S. Senate honoring the North Dakota State University Bison football team, who just won their sixth national championship in 7 years.

Mr. President, I know you are a football fan, so you can truly appreciate what a fantastic achievement that is. What NDSU has accomplished over the

last 7 seasons is absolutely extraordinary. With our victory on Saturday, the Bison have now won six national football championship series division I national titles in 7 years. That ties them for the most of all time. Also, in each of the past 7 years, they have won or shared the top spot in the Missouri Valley Football Conference championship.

We also want to congratulate the James Madison University Dukes on an outstanding year. We had five championships in a row. The Dukes managed to beat us last year in a semifinal game, and we came back and avenged that loss in a thrilling championship game in Frisco, TX. It went down to the final play. It was a very, very exciting game.

Winning a national championship is not easy, and this success, reflected both on and off the field, is earned through hard work and dedication. We recognize and congratulate all of the incredible players and Coach Klieman and his tremendous coaching staff, who put in countless hours of practice and preparation.

We also recognize the importance of good leadership from athletic director Matt Larsen, NDSU president Dean Bresciani, and everyone at NDSU, all the coaches and the staff, team members, and really everybody who is part of Bison Nation. North Dakotans travel with our team. They show up in Bison Nation, and their cheering and supporting our great team is a huge part of our incredible victories.

We congratulate Easton Stick, the quarterback, for achieving MVP honors and leading a tremendous offensive effort by the Bison and also Nick DeLuca, middle linebacker, for leading an incredible defensive effort. These were two tremendous defenses—James Madison and North Dakota State Bison—fast, strong, and it was a thrilling game and fun to watch.

I want to compliment James Madison not only on their program but on all their fans and supporters—a real class act. I am very impressed with James Madison University—their students, their team, and all of their alumni, who also turned out in force for what was a tremendous game in Frisco, TX.

With that, I submit this resolution to the U.S. Senate honoring the North Dakota State Bison.

Mr. President, I have just one other thing to say: Go Bison.

With that, I yield the floor.

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

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

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
CONVENTION AND NAFTA

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I was fortunate enough this week to attend the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention in Nashville, where I had the opportunity to headline a discussion of the farm bill, along with my colleague from Kansas on the

Senate Ag Committee and the gentleman from Texas, Congressman CONAWAY, who is leading on the House Agriculture Committee, during the President's commodity meeting. The American Farm Bureau hosted other farm groups and commodity organizations from across the country to talk about the next farm bill and to try to bring consensus as to what agriculture is looking for in farm policy.

In my opportunity to visit with people at the Farm Bureau's annual meeting, in my remarks, I paid particular attention to the farm bill. It is a farm safety net. When we talk about a farm bill, I suppose we ought to highlight that only a small portion of the farm bill is actually related to farm programs. There are a number of titles to the farm bill, and most of the money in a farm bill is spent on nutrition programs and mostly SNAP, but there are other important components of a farm bill—rural development and conservation. In addition to that topic, which I have been on the Senate floor speaking about before, are food aid and support for those who are experiencing famine around the globe. My opportunity to be with farmers and ranchers from across the country gave me an opportunity to not only speak about my views as to what a farm bill should contain but, more importantly, for me to hear what they had to say that was important to them.

Farm Bureau members from across the country made it clear to me, first of all, that they would like to see Congress—Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate—and the administration work together in a bipartisan fashion to get a farm bill done and, prior to that, to get a disaster relief bill completed, which I hope we will do yet this month on the Senate floor—both the disaster bill that needs to get to the President's desk as soon as possible and also a farm bill that needs to be completed in a timely fashion. The current farm bill under which we are operating expires in 2018.

Of the things I want to highlight that I heard from Farm Bureau members while I was there is certainly the importance of crop insurance and the value it provides, particularly for those of us who live and farm and work in places where the weather is not often our friend, as well as just the challenges the current farm bill is creating in Kansas.

Particularly, the safety net programs PLC and ARC don't work as well as they should or could. Part of that has to do with timeliness, and part is the inability and the difficulty in farmers having to choose between two programs and to predict for a long period—the life of the farm bill—which makes the most sense to them economically. Whether they are going to have high prices, low prices, good weather, or bad weather is a hard thing to know in the life of a farm bill. Again, because of the issues we have with the current farm bill, timeliness

is important because those provisions that are less than satisfactory today will be extended if we aren't successful in completing a farm bill this year.

While the topic of conversation generally revolved around the farm bill, I want to indicate to my colleagues that so much of what I heard was about trade, particularly about NAFTA. The reality is, 98 to 99 percent of the mouths to feed are outside of the United States. Farmers and ranchers earn their livings by feeding a hungry world, and exports matter to us. There was a lot of concern expressed to me and among the farmers and ranchers who were gathered there about the potential of the withdrawal by the United States from NAFTA. Kansas is a good example. Our largest importer—the place to which we export the most agricultural commodities—is Mexico.

It is not just about commodities. In addition to the commodities, there are manufacturing jobs related to food and food products. There are 36,000 jobs that generate more than \$5.7 billion in economic activity, and approximately 14 percent of all jobs and 10 percent of all manufacturing jobs are tied to the food and agricultural sectors. So, when we talk about trade and exports, we are not just talking about shipping a ton of wheat or a carload of wheat to another country; we are also talking about all of the jobs here in the United States. It is not just in growing commodities and not just in raising cattle but all of the jobs that come from taking those commodities, turning them into food, and exporting the food to other countries as well.

I have had this conversation with people within the administration and with my colleagues in the U.S. Senate. I do believe the tax bill we passed will improve the economy and that farmers, lots of other business men and women, manufacturers, and others will experience greater economic opportunity as a result of the passage of the tax bill. I would highlight that the tax rates are a lot less important if we don't have income. If something would happen in which we would not be exporting—for example, if there would be a withdrawal from NAFTA—the outcome could be that the tax rates would become semi-irrelevant because the income levels of farmers and ranchers and those who would have jobs in the food sector would be significantly diminished. Less income means tax rates don't matter as much as they otherwise would.

Things are really difficult in agriculture today. Commodity prices are at low prices historically. The challenges are great. Weather, as I said earlier when speaking about crop insurance, is not always our friend. Across Kansas, the plea is for rain or snowfall or moisture. It is dry statewide. The challenges the producers in my State but really those across the country face are low commodity prices and weather, which are significant. What that means is, we need every additional market.

We cannot afford to lose any market to which we sell those commodities. More markets mean higher prices, and more demand means higher prices. Today, we need every penny we can gain on a bushel of corn or wheat or soybeans or grain sorghum. We need to make certain we don't lose markets but that we gain markets.

I commend the President for traveling to Nashville and speaking and meeting with the American Farm Bureau. I believe it has been 30-plus years since a President attended a Farm Bureau annual convention. I know, in my own experience both in the House and the Senate, reporters have often asked me to analyze what I have heard or haven't heard in a President's State of the Union Address. It has always been my practice to listen to a State of the Union Address and hear whether a President speaks about agriculture, about farmers, about ranchers, about rural America. Here we had a President who traveled to Nashville and spent time with those farmers and ranchers of America, and I am pleased the President did so.

I continue to encourage the administration to remain mindful of the role agricultural trade plays in our economy. I would indicate that our withdrawal from NAFTA is a high-risk strategy—a negotiating tactic, perhaps. It is true we have the highest quality of agriculture products available in the world, but other countries are very interested in taking our markets, and any indication that our markets are not going to continue gives countries like Argentina, Brazil, and others the opportunity to make the case that they will be stable suppliers. The things we raise in the United States they can sell and provide in those countries as well. My point is, we don't have a corner on the market, and any suggestion that we are not a stable supplier or that the trading relationship is going to diminish or disappear between two countries means that others are eagerly seeking to take those markets away from us.

Given the impact on our Nation's economy, I urge those conference attendees, those people I visited with in Nashville, to continue to convey to all of those policymakers the importance of trade and the importance of trade agreements.

The administration has a desire to develop bilateral as compared to multilateral trade agreements, and I encourage those negotiations to be ongoing today. We don't have any time to waste when it comes to finding new markets and trading relationships with other countries.

Again, I appreciate the President traveling to Nashville and spending time with farmers and ranchers, and I appreciate the agenda he outlined in regard to regulatory relief, as well as the issue of broadband, on which the President spent a significant amount of time, providing technology to a part of

the country that has, in many instances, been lacking or woefully inadequate.

But the bottom line is that rural America needs income. We can do lots of things to improve the quality of life in rural America, but in the absence of farmer success, in the absence of a farmer and rancher earning a living, the ability to attract our children or others to come back to the farm and the ability to retain our young people in the community to work on a farm diminishes greatly.

One of the questions I received was from a young lady studying in Texas, and this was her question: What are you doing to make certain that young people have a chance to be farmers? While my answer was less than perfect—it is a hard one to answer—it is an important question. The reality is that the chances of young people having the opportunity in agriculture to earn a living is totally dependent upon the economic success of those individuals in agriculture today and what the future holds. We can find a few programs that might encourage young people to be able to enter agriculture as a profession and as a career, but the reality is that it will only work when they are earning a good living, and that comes, once again, from the safety nets, including crop insurance, which will be included in a farm bill as it works its way through Congress this year, but also in the opportunity to see that every market around the globe is available to the U.S. farmer and rancher so that he and she will earn a living and so that they will increase the chances that their sons and daughters have the opportunity to work side by side with them into the future.

I especially want to thank a few people from the American Farm Bureau Federation for allowing me to attend and inviting me to attend and to speak—certainly, President Zippy Duvall, the president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, from Georgia; Dale Moore, a Kansan who is at the American Farm Bureau Federation; and Mary Kay Thatcher, their long-time government affairs person. All of those individuals at the American Farm Bureau Federation do their job so well, but I especially want to acknowledge the friendship and support of those three individuals.

I am reminded that no matter where we go, farmers and ranchers have a lot in common. In addition to their economic importance to communities across Kansas and around rural America, it is farmers and ranchers that still today provide a sense of what is right in America—an understanding of right and wrong, an understanding of the value of life, integrity, character, and values. It is something that is important not just to rural America but to our entire United States of America. So thank you to the farmers who visited with me. Thank you to the farmers who gave me the opportunity to speak with them and listened to me.

Please know that I am happy and will continue to roll up my sleeves to work with my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats—the Senator from Kansas, the chairman of the Ag Committee; and the Senator from Michigan, the ranking member, Ms. STABENOW. Let's get a good farm bill done. Let's get it done on time, and let's all work together to make sure economic activity is alive and well and trade flourishes between the United States and the rest of the world.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. 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. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I believe that my distinguished colleague and friend, Senator BLUMENTHAL, will be joining me on the floor. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business for such time as I may require and, at the conclusion of my remarks, that Senator BLUMENTHAL be recognized to make his remarks on the same subject.

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

SAFEGUARDING OUR ELECTIONS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, 2018 is going to be an election year. In just 10 months, Americans will go to the polls to exercise their franchise, believing in the integrity of our democratic process. I am here today to discuss a threat to the integrity of that process, which is getting little attention here in Congress—nothing near what it deserves. We really ought to be acting with some expedition to safeguard our elections this November. Yet, instead, the effort is one of chasing down partisan investigative rabbit holes.

What ought to be our job? Well, national security, intelligence, election, and law enforcement officials, many of them testifying before us here in Congress, have made what our job is very clear. We must counter Russia's well-established election interference playbook. Russia will hack. Russia will bully. Russia will propagandize. Perhaps more insidiously, Russia will seek to corrupt, particularly by exploiting cracks in our incorporation and campaign finance laws. We are warned: Russia will seek to interfere in 2018's election.

I ask unanimous consent that an article entitled "CIA's Pompeo says Russia and others trying to undermine U.S. elections" be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

To quote the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Heather Conley, testifying before Congress last spring, corruption is the "lubricant" for Mos-

cow's election interference, so "the battle of Western democracies to defeat corruption" must be seen as "a matter of national security."

Testifying before our Crime and Terrorism Subcommittee, former Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, agreed, saying of Russia's 2016 election meddling:

I believe [the Russians] are now emboldened to continue such activities in the future, both here and around world, and to do so even more intensely. If there has ever been a clarion call for vigilance and action against a threat to the very foundation of our democratic political system, this episode is it. I hope the American people recognize the severity of this threat and that we collectively counter it before it further erodes the fabric of our democracy.

How to counter it? Well, there are two important solutions that witnesses have identified in recent testimony before the Judiciary and other committees here in the Senate.

First, guard against the use of phony shell corporations as facilitators of corruption. Ms. Conley, as I said, wrote that corruption is the "lubricant" with which the Russians operate their interference schemes. She and her colleagues warn that to fight the corruption that gives Russia this channel of influence—and I quote her here—"enhancing transparency and the effectiveness of the Western democratic tools, instruments, and institutions is critical." One central way to cut off this channel of improper influence would be to require companies to disclose who their real owner is so that Russian influence can no longer hide behind anonymous American shell companies.

Another would be to crack down on the dark money that is flooding into American elections. It is illegal for foreign nationals to spend money or participate at all in American elections. Yet, post-Citizens United, the same dark money avenues that allow domestic election interference—for instance, that the Koch brothers use to manipulate American elections—are right out there to be used by Vladimir Putin. If they can hide their identity behind 501(c)(4)s and other dark money channels, so can operatives for the Russians.

Instead of taking up these important measures or even ensuring a thorough investigation into the 2016 election meddling, we are—to paraphrase the legendary Senator Sam Ervin of Watergate fame—chasing rabbits when we should be on a bear hunt.

Let's look at a few rabbits that have distracted us from the task at hand. Remember, when Michael Flynn, the President's former National Security Adviser, illicitly communicated with the Russian Ambassador about sanctions during the transition. Then in the White House, he lied to the FBI about it, which concerned the Justice Department so badly that the Acting Attorney General warned the White House Counsel personally, after which she was fired, but the President then

waited 18 days until all of this had become public in the media to ask for Michael Flynn's resignation. Out of all of that, the topic for many Republicans was the alleged leaks of classified information that allowed the story to come to light—not the story itself of problems at the highest level of our national security establishment. Off people went after the "leaks" rabbit.

Republicans then pivoted to talking about the "unmasking"—remember that word; we heard a lot of it around here—of identities in intelligence reporting and the purported misconduct of Obama administration officials. Trump even publicly suggested that former National Security Adviser Susan Rice may have committed a crime. So off people went after the "unmasking" rabbit.

Next, the President accused President Obama of wiretapping Trump Tower, an allegation so outrageous that even congressional Republicans have refused to stand by it, but my, what a bright and shiny rabbit it was for the weeks that it was still a distraction.

By the spring and summer, Republicans were railing against purported conflicts of interest by FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, a distinguished career public servant.

I ask unanimous consent that this article, "FBI ruled McCabe had no conflict of interest in Clinton probe," be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

So off everybody went after the "McCabe's wife" rabbit.

After President Trump fired FBI Director James Comey to impede the Russia investigation and then told the Russian Foreign Minister and NBC that was why he had done it, the President launched another leak rabbit: a coordinated effort with his lawyers, congressional Republicans, and the rightwing media to suggest that Comey had leaked classified information by sharing with a friend his own contemporaneous notes of conversations with Trump.

Just last week, the President again suggested on Twitter that Comey should be charged with a crime—another bite at the "leaks" rabbit.

In early July, we learned of the June 2016 meeting at Trump Tower between Russian lawyer and operative Natalia Veselnitskaya and senior Trump campaign leaders seeking dirt on Hillary Clinton. Republicans tried to distract attention from that mess by suggesting that Veselnitskaya was in the country on a visa issued by Obama administration officials, with some rightwing media—aided by some congressional Republicans—even whipping on the "visa" rabbit by suggesting there was a setup orchestrated by the Obama administration against the Trump campaign.

Then came the "Fusion" rabbit. Because Fusion GPS had worked on separate projects—one with Christopher Steele and a separate one with Natalia

Veselnitskaya—some Republicans began suggesting either that Russia had been Fusion's client for the Steele dossier or that Steele was the unwitting victim of a Russian disinformation campaign.

Then there is the "Uranium One" rabbit, which began when a rightwing author suggested, without evidence, that Hillary Clinton may have been responsible for a Russian state company acquiring uranium mines in the United States. This rabbit remains a topic of investigation in Congress and in rightwing media.

Then there are the attacks on Bob Mueller, which, like rabbits, multiply by the hour. As the special counsel's investigation started heating up over the late summer and fall, the rightwing began investigating the investigation—alleged conflicts of interest, history of campaign donations, inappropriate text messages, questions about spouses' employment. But the big one was that the FBI was corruptly involved in the procurement of the Steele dossier and that this had launched the "witch hunt." This, of course, is a very shiny rabbit.

However, a week ago, reporting by the New York Times confirmed that the FBI did not begin its investigation into Donald Trump's connections to Russia because of the so-called Steele dossier. This should not come as a surprise. We have already been told that U.S. allies warned American national security officials about Russian interference in our 2016 elections.

In response to a question from Ranking Member FEINSTEIN at our Crime and Terrorism Subcommittee hearing on May 8, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper confirmed that "Britain's intelligence service"—Britain's intelligence service—"first became aware in late 2015 of suspicious interactions between Trump advisers and Russian intelligence agents," and the Brits passed that information on to U.S. intelligence agencies. Clapper confirmed that in "the spring of 2016, multiple European allies passed on additional information to the United States about contacts between the Trump campaign and Russians." Clapper said that these reports were accurate and that "the specifics are quite sensitive."

Now we have learned that Trump campaign foreign policy adviser George Papadopoulos, who pled guilty last year to lying to the FBI, apparently told a senior Australian official in the spring of 2016 that Russia had dirt on Hillary Clinton. This is something he said he had been told by an intermediary for the Russians. When hacked emails started showing up that summer, Australia's Government became sufficiently concerned to let U.S. officials know about what they had learned from Papadopoulos.

So you have the British intelligence community warnings, the European intelligence community warnings, the Australian warnings, and Carter Page's travels to Russia. You have the attri-

bution of the DNC hack, the intrusion into those emails, to Russian hackers. You have the leaking of the stolen emails. You have abundant evidence out of all of that for the FBI that the Trump campaign's links to Russia required further investigation. It would have been a complete failure of their duty to not have looked further based on all of that evidence.

That is not to say that Christopher Steele and his work are not taken seriously by U.S. intelligence and law enforcement officials. U.S. security agencies have relied on Steele's analysis long before any dossier appeared. Steele is a leading Russia expert. Beginning in 1990, as an undercover officer in Moscow, he watched the Soviet Union unravel. He observed Russia's current leaders ascend through the Russian security services during the 1990s and 2000s. He rose to a senior position on MI6's Russia desk in London. Since leaving MI6, his reports on Russia and Ukraine have been shared widely within the U.S. Government as credible reporting. A U.S. official told the Guardian that Steele's reports were "consistently reliable, meticulous, and well-informed."

But you would never know this from listening to congressional Republicans. They have been repeating, in chorus with the White House and conservative media, the disproven claim that the Russians somehow commissioned the Steele dossier or that Steele somehow got suckered by the Russians or that some deep-state FBI set up the whole thing to pressure Trump. They have pushed to discredit Steele. They have pushed to discredit Fusion.

As one example, rewind to the Judiciary Committee's hearing on the Foreign Agents Registration Act, or FARA, last July. On the morning of the second day of that hearing, the President tweeted: "One of the things that has been lost in the politics of this situation is that the Russians collected and spread negative information about then candidate Trump." This is Trump tweeting about himself. His tweet came shortly after a segment on FOX News centered on the same question. Other rightwing outlets parroted the same message.

That same day, Republicans in Congress spun out the same premise that Russians paid for the dossier and that the dossier was, to use their word, the "genesis" of the FBI's inquiry. I hope we have made it clear that this was not the genesis.

While the FARA hearing was still going on, that same day, the gop.gov website published this post:

[W]e now know a Russian backed, Democrat connected research firm, with a history of smearing individuals and pitching fake information to reporters, was hired by opponents of President Trump to compile a "dossier" of supposed Trump ties to Russia.

The information that was compiled was taken seriously by the highest level of our intelligence community along with our media, despite obvious signs that the firm behind it was tied to Russia.

As a reminder, this phony “dossier” helped spark the investigation now led by Special Counsel Mueller.

That is the rabbit we are chasing now.

The uniformity of the rightwing message that day with the White House was telling, but the message—the content of it—is simply not true. In fact, at that hearing, the witness denied any knowledge of any link between Russians and the clients of the Steele dossier.

In the months that followed, Fusion GPS’s founder, Glenn Simpson, spent over 20 hours speaking with congressional investigators, including investigators from the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I ask unanimous consent that his op-ed be printed in the RECORD as a third and final item at the conclusion of my remarks.

During these interviews, he specifically told Democratic and Republican staff alike that the dossier was taken seriously by the FBI because it corroborated reports the Bureau had already received from other sources—remember the British, the European, the Australian we have talked about—and a source inside the Trump campaign. From the Time’s recent reporting, we can conclude that that source was George Papadopoulos. This has all been known for months, but the narrative about Fusion GPS and the FBI grinds on, unhinged from fact.

The revelation about George Papadopoulos and the Australian Government should serve as a clarifying moment about the rightwing effort to undermine Bob Mueller’s investigation of the ties of the Trump campaign and his Presidency to Russia. The FBI investigation did not begin because of opposition research. It did not begin because researchers or journalists or American national security officials fell victim to Russian disinformation. It did not begin because of fake news or because Democrats needed an explanation for losing an election. It began when multiple allies, friends of the United States, warned us that the Russian Government was interfering in our democratic process—something many of them knew about from Russia’s interference in their own democratic process.

We still do not know to what extent that interference may have been facilitated or even simply known to members of the Trump campaign or other Trump associates. We still have done nothing to prevent further interference in our elections in 2018. The special counsel’s investigation and the investigations going on in Congress must be allowed to continue until all of the facts are known.

Here in the Senate, we should stop looking for new distractions, stop chasing rabbits, and start thinking about how we are going to protect our future elections—our 2018 election—against a repeat performance, which we have been warned about, by the Russians or

another foreign adversary, for that matter.

As the Center for Strategic and International Studies warns in its report, “The Kremlin Playbook,” we must fight the avenues for corruption that give Russia influence. We must “enhanc[e] transparency” in government and build “resilience against Russian influence” in our elections and elsewhere in American society.

I will conclude by saying that the best measure of our success in Congress will be an America defended against foreign election interference in time to protect our 2018 elections. If we have not achieved that, we have failed at our duty. I do not see us presently on a path to meet that goal. We are less than a year out from election day. We have work to do. Enough with the rabbits.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CIA’S POMPEO SAYS RUSSIA AND OTHERS
TRYING TO UNDERMINE U.S. ELECTIONS
(By Susan Cornwell)

WASHINGTON (REUTERS).—The head of the Central Intelligence Agency said on Sunday that Russia and others are trying to undermine elections in the United States, the next major one being in November when Republicans will try to keep control of Congress.

U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election to try to help President Donald Trump win, in part by hacking and releasing emails embarrassing to Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, and spreading social media propaganda.

CIA Director Mike Pompeo told CBS that the Russian interference is longstanding, and continues. Asked on “Face the Nation” if Moscow is currently trying to undermine U.S. elections, Pompeo responded: “Yes sir, have been for decades.”

“Yes, I continue to be concerned, not only about the Russians, but about others’ efforts as well,” Pompeo said, without giving details. “We have many foes who want to undermine Western democracy.”

Moscow denies any meddling in the 2016 elections to help Republican Trump win. U.S. Special Counsel Robert Mueller is investigating whether any crimes were committed. Two Trump associates, former national security adviser Michael Flynn and campaign aide George Papadopoulos have pleaded guilty to lying to FBI agents in the probe. Trump denies any campaign collusion with Russia.

Trump has at times suggested that he accepts the U.S. intelligence agencies’ assessment that Russia sought to interfere in the election but at other times has said he accepts Russian President Vladimir Putin’s denials that Moscow meddled.

Trump has frequently spoken of wanting to improve relations with Putin, even though Russia has frustrated U.S. policy in Syria and Ukraine and done little to help Washington in its standoff with North Korea.

Pompeo told CBS that the CIA had an important function as a part of the national security team to keep U.S. elections secure and democratic. “We are working diligently to do that. So we’re going to work against the Russians or any others who threaten that very outcome,” he said.

Trump said on Saturday that he planned an active year on the campaign trail on behalf of Republican candidates running in the mid-term elections, in which all of the House

of Representatives and one-third of the Senate will be up for election. Republicans hold majorities in both.

[From The Hill, Jan. 5, 2018]

FBI RULED MCCABE HAD NO CONFLICT OF
INTEREST IN CLINTON PROBE: DOCS
(By Julia Manchester)

The FBI said in documents released Friday that Deputy Director Andrew McCabe did not have any role in the probe into Hillary Clinton’s private email server while his wife ran as a Democrat for state office in Virginia.

The documents note that Jill McCabe announced her candidacy for state Senate in Virginia in March 2015, while Andrew McCabe’s role as deputy director started in February 2016, three months after his wife lost her electoral bid.

Andrew McCabe had asked ethics officials if his wife’s candidacy would lead to a potential conflict of interest while he was working as an assistant director at the FBI Field Office in Washington, D.C., the documents show.

“From the first contemplation that his wife would run for office in Virginia, [McCabe] sought out and consulted with ethics officers, which included briefings on the Hatch Act,” the records state.

A “system of recusal” was also put in place to prevent any potential conflicts of interests, according to the documents.

The release of the documents comes after President Trump and other Republicans have claimed McCabe had a conflict of interest due to his wife’s electoral bid, noting that her campaign was supported by a super-PAC associated to Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D), a Clinton ally.

“How can FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, the man in charge, along with leakin’ James Comey, of the Phony Hillary Clinton investigation (including her 33,000 illegally deleted emails) be given \$700,000 for wife’s campaign by Clinton Puppets during investigation?” Trump tweeted last month:

“How can FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, the man in charge, along with leakin’ James Comey of the Phony Hillary Clinton investigation (including her 33,000 illegally deleted emails) be given \$700,000 for wife’s campaign by Clinton Puppets during investigation?” 3:27 PM—Dec. 23, 2017

Trump’s tweet and others he sent targeting the No. 2 FBI official amid the federal Russia probe came after it was revealed McCabe would be retiring from his post in the coming months.

Trump interviewed McCabe to be FBI director in May after he fired James Comey from the top post. The president ultimately tapped Christopher Wray for the bureau’s top spot.

[From the New York Times, Jan. 2, 2018]

THE REPUBLICANS’ FAKE INVESTIGATIONS
(By Glenn R. Simpson and Peter Fritsch)

A generation ago, Republicans sought to protect President Richard Nixon by urging the Senate Watergate committee to look at supposed wrongdoing by Democrats in previous elections. The committee chairman, Sam Ervin, a Democrat, said that would be “as foolish as the man who went bear hunting and stopped to chase rabbits.”

Today, amid a growing criminal inquiry into Russian meddling in the 2016 election, congressional Republicans are again chasing rabbits. We know because we’re their favorite quarry.

In the year since the publication of the so-called Steele dossier—the collection of intelligence reports we commissioned about Donald Trump’s ties to Russia—the president

has repeatedly attacked us on Twitter. His allies in Congress have dug through our bank records and sought to tarnish our firm to punish us for highlighting his links to Russia. Conservative news outlets and even our former employer, *The Wall Street Journal*, have spun a succession of mendacious conspiracy theories about our motives and backers.

We are happy to correct the record. In fact, we already have.

Three congressional committees have heard over 21 hours of testimony from our firm, Fusion GPS. In those sessions, we toppled the far right's conspiracy theories and explained how *The Washington Free Beacon* and the Clinton campaign—the Republican and Democratic funders of our Trump research—separately came to hire us in the first place.

We walked investigators through our year-long effort to decipher Mr. Trump's complex business past, of which the Steele dossier is but one chapter. And we handed over our relevant bank records—while drawing the line at a fishing expedition for the records of companies we work for that have nothing to do with the Trump case.

Republicans have refused to release full transcripts of our firm's testimony, even as they selectively leak details to media outlets on the far right. It's time to share what our company told investigators.

We don't believe the Steele dossier was the trigger for the F.B.I.'s investigation into Russian meddling. As we told the Senate Judiciary Committee in August, our sources said the dossier was taken so seriously because it corroborated reports the bureau had received from other sources, including one inside the Trump camp.

The intelligence committees have known for months that credible allegations of collusion between the Trump camp and Russia were pouring in from independent sources during the campaign. Yet lawmakers in the thrall of the president continue to wage a cynical campaign to portray us as the unwitting victims of Kremlin disinformation.

We suggested investigators look into the bank records of Deutsche Bank and others that were funding Mr. Trump's businesses. Congress appears uninterested in that tip: Reportedly, ours are the only bank records the House Intelligence Committee has subpoenaed.

We told Congress that from Manhattan to Sunny Isles Beach, Fla., and from Toronto to Panama, we found widespread evidence that Mr. Trump and his organization had worked with a wide array of dubious Russians in arrangements that often raised questions about money laundering. Likewise, those deals don't seem to interest Congress.

We explained how, from our past journalistic work in Europe, we were deeply familiar with the political operative Paul Manafort's coziness with Moscow and his financial ties to Russian oligarchs close to Vladimir Putin.

Finally, we debunked the biggest canard being pushed by the president's men—the notion that we somehow knew of the June 9, 2016, meeting in Trump Tower between some Russians and the Trump brain trust. We first learned of that meeting from news reports last year—and the committees know it. They also know that these Russians were unaware of the former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele's work for us and were not sources for his reports.

Yes, we hired Mr. Steele, a highly respected Russia expert. But we did so without informing him whom we were working for and gave him no specific marching orders beyond this basic question: Why did Mr. Trump repeatedly seek to do deals in a notoriously corrupt police state that most serious investors shun?

What came back shocked us. Mr. Steele's sources in Russia (who were not paid) reported on an extensive—and now confirmed—effort by the Kremlin to help elect Mr. Trump president. Mr. Steele saw this as a crime in progress and decided he needed to report it to the F.B.I.

We did not discuss that decision with our clients, or anyone else. Instead, we deferred to Mr. Steele, a trusted friend and intelligence professional with a long history of working with law enforcement. We did not speak to the F.B.I. and haven't since.

After the election, Mr. Steele decided to share his intelligence with Senator John McCain via an emissary. We helped him do that. The goal was to alert the United States national security community to an attack on our country by a hostile foreign power. We did not, however, share the dossier with BuzzFeed, which to our dismay published it last January.

We're extremely proud of our work to highlight Mr. Trump's Russia ties. To have done so is our right under the First Amendment.

In is time to stop chasing rabbits. The public still has much to learn about a man with the most troubling business past of any United States president. Congress should release transcripts of our firm's testimony, so that the American people can learn the truth about our work and most important, what happened to our democracy.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I now yield, per the pending agreement, to my distinguished friend from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. President.

I thank my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE for his very erudite and insightful summary of the bright, shiny toys and rabbits and rabbit holes that a number of our colleagues have attempted to use to distract the Judiciary Committee and this body from what should be its quest for the truth; that is, the truth about the Russian attack on our democracy during the last election and potential collusion in that attack—specifically, collusion by the Trump campaign—and obstruction of justice. Indeed, obstruction of justice is within the direct purview of the Judiciary Committee.

I want to thank my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE for joining me in a letter that we wrote to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator GRASSLEY, asking that he very simply make public the transcript of the interview with Glenn Simpson conducted by our staff. Senator GRASSLEY declined. But, earlier today, Senator FEINSTEIN released the interview, advancing the American people's right and need to know the full truth.

I want to applaud Senator FEINSTEIN's leadership in using her proper authority as the ranking member to serve this vital public interest. I am grateful to her for her courage and strength in moving forward and disclosing the transcript to prevent its use as a dangerous distraction from the critical work of our committee. I want to thank at least one of our colleagues across the aisle, Senator CORNYN, for apparently supporting that step.

The toys and rabbits and rabbit holes are hardly new to efforts by defenders

of an administration against an investigation, and perhaps for some amusement as well as enlightenment, I want to cite a satiric column done by Art Buchwald in 1973.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the column be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

HERE ARE HANDY EXCUSES FOR NIXON BACKERS

(By Art Buchwald)

WASHINGTON.—These are difficult times for people who are defending the Nixon administration. No matter where they go they are attacked by pseudo-liberals, McGovern lovers, heterosexual constitutionalists and paranoid John Dean believers.

As a public service, I am printing instant responses for loyal Nixonites when they are attacked at a party. Please cut it out and carry it in your pocket.

- 1—Everyone does it.
- 2—What about Chappaquiddick?
- 3—A President can't keep track of everything his staff does.
- 4—The press is blowing the whole thing up.
- 5—Whatever Nixon did was for national security.
- 6—The Democrats are sore because they lost the election.
- 7—Are you going to believe a rat like John Dean or the President of the United States?
- 8—Wait till all the facts come out.
- 9—What about Chappaquiddick?
- 10—If you impeach Nixon, you get Agnew.
- 11—The only thing wrong with Watergate is they got caught.
- 12—What about Daniel Ellsberg stealing the Pentagon Papers?
- 13—It happens in Europe all the time.
- 14—People would be against Nixon no matter what he did.
- 15—I'd rather have a crook in the White House than a fool.
- 16—L.B.J. used to read FBI reports every night.
- 17—What's the big deal about finding out what your opposition is up to?
- 18—The President was too busy running the country to know what was going on.
- 19—What about Chappaquiddick?
- 20—People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.
- 21—McGovern would have lost anyway.
- 22—Maybe the Committee for the Re-Election of the President went a little too far, but they were just a bunch of eager kids.
- 23—I'm not for breaking the law, but sometimes you have to do it to save the country.
- 24—Nixon made a mistake. He's only human.
- 25—Do you realize what Watergate is doing to the dollar abroad?
- 26—What about Harry Truman and the deep freeze scandal?
- 27—Franklin D. Roosevelt did a lot worse things.
- 28—I'm sick and tired of hearing about Watergate and so is everybody else.
- 29—This thing should be tried in the courts and not on television.
- 30—When Nixon gives his explanation of what happened there are going to be a lot of people in this country with egg on their faces.
- 31—My country right or wrong.
- 32—What about Chappaquiddick?
- 33—I think the people who make all this fuss about Watergate should be shot.
- 34—If the Democrats had the money they would have done the same thing.
- 35—I never trusted Haldeman and Ehrlichman to start with.

36—If you say one more word about Watergate I'll punch you in the nose.

A—If the person is bigger than you: “If you say one more word about Watergate I'm leaving this house.”

B—If it's your own house and the person is bigger than you: “What about Chappaquiddick?”

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. Buchwald wrote a satirical list of tactics Republicans were using to keep Americans from focusing on the Watergate scandal. The list is eerily familiar. The tactics being employed by the Trump supporters today ring of those same tactics used in Watergate. Buchwald suggests focusing on accusations made against prominent Democrats or individuals who had accused Richard Nixon of wrongdoing. He suggests attacking the media. He suggests saying: “The Democrats are sore because they lost.” He suggests deflecting blame to a “bunch of eager kids”—perhaps sounding like the reference to “coffee boys” today—and saying that this investigation is “bad for the dollar,” much like bad for America abroad.

I am very confident—and I want to emphasize this point very emphatically—that the special counsel will be in no way distracted from his investigation and his team will be undeterred by these tactics. But the American people should not be distracted or deterred either and, equally important, the Judiciary Committee, the U.S. Senate, and the Congress as a whole has a duty here that is, in fact, vulnerable to that same distraction. We must persevere.

What our Republican colleagues are doing at this point is indicated by a recent New York Times article. The article describes President Trump's efforts to persuade congressional allies to drop their investigations, and it says:

Another Republican Senator said Mr. Trump had not urged him to help bring the Russia inquiry to a halt. Instead, the Senator said, the President nudged him to begin an investigation into Hillary Clinton's connection with the intelligence-gathering firm Fusion GPS, which produced a dossier of allegations about Mr. Trump's ties to Moscow.

The goal was to stop the investigation of Russian meddling, but the implication in the article is that the President knew he could achieve that goal as effectively, or at least more practically, by distracting from those investigations, diverting resources to other issues, and muddying the waters for the American people. That is the playbook from 1973 that is referenced by Art Buchwald in his 1973 column.

Here is the danger: Distractions are dangerous, and efforts to discredit law enforcement are equally perilous. Those efforts have included not only the urging for an investigation of Uranium One and Fusion GPS but also attacks on the integrity of some members of the FBI and the FBI as a whole and attacks on individual members of the special counsel's team, on the team as a whole, and on Robert Mueller himself. The effort plainly is to discredit the investigation before it reaches a

potentially incriminating conclusion and to stop the investigation, but if not stop it, at least to demean its credibility before charges are brought.

It is standard operating procedure. We know as prosecutors. The distinguished Senator from Rhode Island and I served as U.S. attorneys and then attorneys general for our States. We know going into the courtroom that we can expect to be attacked and that our teams can be expected to be attacked. That is what defense lawyers do. That is what they do because they hope to demean and discredit and dismantle the credibility of prosecutors before the jury in the courtroom. Here, the courtroom is not a court of law but the court of public opinion. Our Republican friends have launched that preemptive strike, methodically and meticulously, just as the special counsel is engaging in his investigation methodically and meticulously.

Now, I referred to Republican colleagues, and I believe strongly and passionately that many, if not most, of our Republican colleagues share our zeal for the rule of law and for a just outcome to this investigation. The reason is very simple. The Russian attack on our democracy imperils not just this administration and not just one election. It imperils our democracy as a whole. The meddling in our elections was perhaps done to advance the Trump candidacy in 2016, but it can be used against the Trump candidacy in 2020. It can be used against another Republican candidate in that year. It could be used in 2018 against other candidates for Congress or for State election.

My Republican colleagues have been as eloquent as any of us in defining that threat because there is no doubt in the intelligence community that it is a threat, that the Russians did interfere, and that they sought to advance the Trump candidacy. Whether there was an impact and what the impact was may never be known, but the effort is clear. It involved a massive campaign of disinformation, propaganda, cyber attack, and other means. That is what the FBI learned was happening, not as a result of Christopher Steele but from sources within the Trump campaign, including George Papadopoulos, and from other intelligence sources, and that is what we must make sure is known to the American public. We must make sure that anyone who aided the Russians pays a price and that the Russians themselves pay a price, because if there is no price, it will be done with impunity again.

So there should be—and I believe there is—bipartisan apprehension about that threat to our Nation's security. That is the reason that the Judiciary Committee's investigation, along with the special counsel, is so important, because our purview includes obstruction of justice and the integrity of the Department of Justice. Any interference politically with the FBI's investigation into Russian meddling

must be prevented in the future as well. Only the Judiciary Committee can frame and craft legislation that will help to protect the FBI.

Senator WHITEHOUSE and I, and Senator FEINSTEIN and others on the committee, will be proposing such legislation based on what we know so far. It is legislation that essentially protects the rule of law against such efforts to obstruct justice and politically interfere.

The intelligence community's conclusions about Russian meddling did not rely on the credibility of Glenn Simpson or Christopher Steele. The two guilty pleas and convictions that the special counsel has already secured do not rely on the credibility of Simpson or Steele. Without fear of contradiction, I can predict that additional convictions and indictments will be based on fact and law, not on the credibility of Simpson and Steele. The conclusions reached by Simpson, Steele, or anybody else are relevant only insofar as they are supported and backed and proved by facts and consistent with relevant law.

Now, in fact, as we know, Christopher Steele tried to blow the whistle on the Russians. He brought to the FBI's attention information that he thought was relevant to protecting the United States of America against Russian interference. As my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE has outlined in detail, the FBI already knew of it and courteously heard from Christopher Steele and later interviewed him.

The effort to undermine the credibility of the FBI by pointing to Christopher Steele completely misses the mark. In fact, I am deeply disappointed that the first major action by our Republican colleagues on the Judiciary Committee was aimed at someone who reported wrongdoing, not committed it, and it was done without any cooperation or even consultation with Democratic colleagues. It is really a betrayal of the spirit that I think should characterize this very serious investigation, because it should be bipartisan.

My hope is that these distractions, dangerous as they are, will, in fact, not divert either our committee or the special counsel. The pace of our committee's investigation—again, to be very blunt—has been shamefully slow. I hope that its pace will quicken and that it will intensify and that there will be hearings in public with witnesses under oath and subpoenas of documents. I have said it repeatedly. I hope we will use those tools because only by relying on our powers to investigate effectively and comprehensively will we protect the goals of upholding integrity and justice.

As for the special counsel and our law enforcement community, I think they should know that we support them and that we will protect the special counsel against political interference. That is why there is legislation I have proposed, along with my

colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE and others. It is bipartisan legislation. I thank Senators TILLIS and GRAHAM, as well as Senators COONS and BOOKER, for joining in this legislation. That legislation has already had a hearing. It should be voted to the floor and passed by the Congress so that there is no question that the special counsel will be protected against interference or firing.

As that investigation moves closer to the Oval Office, as it tightens its grip on members of the administration, there will be increasing threats and efforts to intimidate. The FBI and the Department of Justice, as well as the special counsel, have a well-earned reputation for integrity and zeal. It is part of our rule of law that a law is enforced. Enforcement of a law depends on thorough and independent investigations that are pursued without fear or favor, without efforts to distract or demean. This body, the U.S. Congress, has an obligation to support those kinds of values. They are uniquely American values. They are the underpinning of all of our laws, all that we hold dear, and all that we celebrate in this body and in this country.

My hope is that we will be part of the effort to avoid politicizing the pursuit of justice. Politicization of the pursuit of justice diverts energy and attention away from credible criminal investigations. It sends a message to this President and future Presidents—and everybody who occupies any office—that there are no repercussions for diverting and distracting and for the ploys and rabbit holes that may be used to squander resources or undermine credibility.

Republicans and Democrats alike should join in the effort to preserve the rule of law. My hope is that we will and will do so without delay because every day that passes when these kinds of false, baseless, and biased innuendos and rumors are raised and given credence is a day that undermines those values that we hold dear.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank Senators WHITEHOUSE and BLUMENTHAL for their remarks.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. President, it has been 100 days since this Congress allowed the Children's Health Insurance Program to expire. Congress did nothing in September, October, November, and December, and now we are more than a week into January—100 days of anxiety for parents, 100 days of wondering if their kids will be kicked off their coverage, 100 days of worrying if they will be able to afford their child's prescriptions or worrying whether they can take them to the doctor if they get the flu.

Members of Congress—new Members, such as Senators SMITH and JONES, Members like Senator HATCH, who has been here for 40 years, and all of us—have healthcare paid for by taxpayers.

We remember the discussion of the tax bill written down the hall in the office of Majority Leader MCCONNELL. The Senate found plenty of time in December to pass a massive handout for corporations. The Presiding Officer, the Senator from Florida, has since questioned whether too much of this bill went to corporate interests. More than 80 percent of the tax cut bill went to the richest 1 percent.

In addition, we know it was a massive handout for corporations that sent jobs overseas. We are going to see more companies shut down in Mansfield, Lima, Zanesville, Chillicothe, Portsmouth, and in big cities like Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati. We are going to see more plants close and move overseas because this Senate and the House passed a tax bill that encourages more corporations to ship jobs overseas. All the while, this body couldn't be bothered to give families more than a short-term funding Band-Aid for CHIP, which experts have said will not even last the last 3 months they promised.

I applaud the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Florida, for his efforts to enlarge at least some of the tax bill to put more money into the pockets of working families, particularly low-income working families. It was not enough, but at least some effort was made.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are reporting that some States will run out of money by January 19, next week. In my State of Ohio, 209,000 children rely on CHIP. Who are these kids? These are sons and daughters of Ohioans, who are working, in most cases, making \$8, \$10, or \$12 an hour. They are the sons and daughters of parents who don't have insurance not because they aren't working as hard or harder than we do, but they don't have insurance simply because their parents happen to work at a job where they are not provided insurance.

There are 209,000 Ohio children who rely on CHIP, a program that has been bipartisan for 20 years. It was without controversy in the past. Families in some States already got letters last year and early this year warning them that their children could lose their healthcare.

Think about these families. The parents of some of these millions of children around the country come home from work, working in a \$10-an-hour job, not making a lot of money. They are working every bit as hard as we do. They go to the mailbox and see a letter from their State government. I will read one of these letters, a copy of which went to tens of thousands of parents: Because Congress has not acted yet, we need to let you know there is a chance that the CHIP Program may have to be shut down. In other words, there is a chance that your children's health insurance will be cut off.

Remember, this is because of the inaction in this body. This is because Senators, who have insurance paid for

by taxpayers, would rather vote for tax cuts, would rather do whatever we do all day instead of renewing the Children's Health Insurance Program.

This letter goes on: If Congress does not renew Federal funds for CHIP in time, you will get another letter in January telling you your benefits will end.

So first, it is a warning. Some parents got this warning right around Christmastime. They are already struggling financially. They are not giving their children nearly as much as they want for Christmas because they are making \$8, \$10, or \$12 an hour. They are just trying to stay above water. They are just trying to raise their kids. They get a letter like this at Christmastime saying: If Congress doesn't act, there is really bad news; your kids are going to lose their insurance. Then the same letter says: If Congress doesn't act, in January you will get another letter saying your insurance is cut off.

It is already an expensive time of year. There is record cold in Ohio. Several of our grandchildren live in Columbus, one of them in St. Croix, and two in Providence, RI. When a number of our grandchildren were around, it was too cold to go outside. It was that kind of winter in Ohio. The day after Christmas, temperatures dropped to single digits for 5, 6, or 7 days running. Families are paying more for their heating bill. At Christmastime, of course, it is more expensive. Now their government adds to this list of worries.

How do they plan their budget for this year if they don't know whether or not they will have to shell out thousands of dollars more for care for their kids? Remember, 9 million children are at risk because of Republican inaction. Senator PORTMAN, my Republican colleague from Ohio, and I and almost every other Senator on the Finance Committee voted to move forward on CHIP, to renew it for these 9 million children for 5 years. That was a good thing. It passed out of committee, but Senator MCCONNELL, for whatever reason, didn't think this was important enough to actually put it on the floor, move on it, and get it to the President.

I have no idea if the President will sign it. I don't think he knows much about the Children's Health Insurance Program, but I assume his advisers will say that it is probably a good idea to sign it. But he hasn't had a chance to sign it because the majority leader doesn't think this bill is important enough—that these 9 million children are important enough—that Congress should take action.

These are often families with two working parents. They might make \$8, \$10, or \$12 an hour, but they are working in jobs where they are not lucky enough to have health insurance. They work for companies or many for small businesses that, for whatever reason, can't afford it. Whatever the reason, they are working for companies that don't offer health insurance coverage

for their families, or they are families with children with special needs.

I have introduced to my colleagues before Crystal Lett. This is Crystal's son Noble, a first-grader in Dublin, OH, a small, prosperous suburb west and northwest of Columbus.

I met Crystal and Noble last year, when they made the trip from Ohio to Washington to talk to Members of Congress about CHIP. Crystal's life is not easy because she is taking care of a child with a disability whom she so clearly and dearly loves. I could see, watching Noble, how much he loves his mother and how important they are to each other.

Noble was born with a rare genetic disorder. He needs three therapy sessions every week. He gets daily hormone injections. His medications cost \$1,500 a month. I talked to Crystal when she visited. I talked to her again. We talked about how she and her family are scared to death about what will happen to them if Congress doesn't save CHIP.

This is not difficult. Congress has renewed it every year for 20 years. It is bipartisan. It has never had much of any opposition. There are a lot of people like Noble's mother. Crystal said CHIP is "the difference between living a middle class lifestyle, or being part of the poverty line."

Congress had time to hand out massive permanent tax cuts to the richest Americans and the biggest corporations that send job overseas, but it could only manage to scrape together just a little short-term 3 months of funding for these families.

It is really what is wrong with this city. Folks here listen too much to the lobbyists. I remember—and the Presiding Officer remembers, too—seeing the stream of lobbyists from drug companies, from insurance companies, from the big banks, and from the oil industry, in and out of Senator McConnell's office, writing a tax bill. We remember that from just a couple of months ago. But for some reason, Crystal and Noble couldn't get in that line—the line of lobbyists asking for huge tax breaks, saving billions of dollars for their employers while these lobbyists are paid very well. But, frankly, there was nobody having the political wherewithal to convince the majority leader that we ought to move on the CHIP bill.

Healthcare for our kids shouldn't be controversial. It never was until this recent Senate and until this recent President was sworn in. It shouldn't be partisan. It should be easy. It is a program created 20 years ago. It was bipartisan. It has always been bipartisan. It still has bipartisan support today, except that the Speaker of the House down the hall and the majority leader a little closer to us just simply don't want to pass it.

We passed the CHIP extension out of the Finance Committee. It is ready to go. Republican leaders could put it on the floor today, and it would pass. I am

guessing that it would pass with no more than 5 or 10 "no" votes.

I want my colleagues to explain to Noble's mother Crystal and to explain to other mothers and fathers like her why corporate tax cuts are more important than their children's health.

This is about whose side you are on. Do we work for the corporations that send our jobs overseas, do we work for those companies that line up hungrily for tax breaks, or do we work for families who just want the peace of mind so they can take their kids to the doctor?

It is past time for folks in Congress, with taxpayer-funded healthcare, to do their jobs and extend CHIP. I don't want more families to get a letter like this from their capital city, from the Department of Welfare or the Department of Job and Family Services, whatever it is in each community in each State. I don't want any more parents to go to the mailbox, to open this letter, and to have that fear and anxiety hit them in their gut, thinking: Oh, my God, my children's health insurance may be canceled.

We can do better than that.

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. 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.

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.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17-69, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Japan for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$133.3 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

CHARLES W. HOOPER,
Lieutenant General, USA,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-69

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Japan.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment * \$123.0 million.

Other \$10.3 million.

Total \$133.3 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Four (4) Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA Missiles.

Non-MDE: Also included are four (4) MK 29 missile canisters, U.S. Government and contractor representatives' technical assistance, transportation, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistical and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Navy (JA-P-ATB).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: January 9, 2018.

* As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Japan—Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA Missiles

Government of Japan has requested a possible sale of four (4) Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA missiles. Also included are four (4) MK 29 missile canisters, U.S. Government and contractor representatives' technical assistance, transportation, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistical and program support. The estimated total case value is \$133.3 million.

This proposed sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States by improving the security of a major ally that has been, and continues to be, a force for political stability and economic progress in the Asia-Pacific region.

The proposed sale will provide Japan with an increased ballistic missile defense capability to assist in defending the Japanese homeland and U.S. personnel stationed there. Japan will have no difficulty absorbing these additional munitions and support into the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF).

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractors will be Raytheon Missile Systems, Tucson, AZ (SM-3); and BAE Systems, Minneapolis, MN (MK 29). There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will require annual trips to Japan involving U.S. Government and contractor representatives for technical reviews, support, and oversight for approximately five years.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-69

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The proposed sale will involve the release of sensitive technology to the Government of Japan related to the Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA missile. The ship- or ground-launched SM-3 Block IIA is the most recent iteration in the SM-3 family. It has two distinct new features: larger rocket motors that will allow it to defend broader areas from ballistic missile threats; and a larger kinetic warhead. The kinetic warhead has been enhanced, improving the search, discrimination, acquisition and tracking functions, to address emerging threats. Once enclosed in the canister, the SM-3 Block IIA missile is classified CONFIDENTIAL. The optics hardware and signal processor are classified SECRET.

2. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of specific hardware, the information could be used to develop countermeasures which might reduce weapons system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

3. A determination has been made that Japan can provide substantially the same degree of protection for sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This proposed sustainment program is necessary to the furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the policy justification.

4. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal are authorized for release and export to the Government of Japan.

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17-50, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Oman for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$62 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

CHARLES W. HOOPER,
Lieutenant General, USA,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-50

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Oman.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* \$0 million.

Other \$62 million.

Total \$62 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: The Government of Oman has requested a possible sale of items and services to support an incremental Operational Flight Profile (OFP) software upgrade for F-16 subsystems, as well as Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) and secure communications equipment for Mode 5 operations, on twenty-three (23) F-16 aircraft.

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): None.

Non-MDE includes: Non-MDE items and services consist of twenty-nine (29) KIV-78 cryptographic/timing modules (twenty-three (23) installed and six (6) spares); twenty-nine (29) KY-100M cryptographic radio encryptors (twenty-three (23) installed and six (6) spares); twenty-nine (29) AN/APX-126 Combined Interrogator Transponders (twenty-three (23) installed and six (6) spares); Classified and Unclassified Computer Program Identification Numbers (CPINS) upgrades; OFP upgrades for IFF Mode 5 capable systems; Joint Mission Planning (JMPS) upgrade; Sniper Advanced Targeting Pod software, service support, support equipment, spares, and training; systems support and test equipment; spare and repair parts; publications and technical documentation; training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor engineering; logistics and technical support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (MU-D-QAR).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: January 5, 2018.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Oman—F-16 Operational Flight Profile and Identification Friend or Foe Mode 5 Upgrade

The Government of Oman has requested a possible sale of items and services to support an incremental Operational Flight Profile (OFP) software upgrade for F-16 subsystems, as well as Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) and secure communications equipment for Mode 5 operations on twenty-three (23) F-16 aircraft. Non-MDE items and services consist of twenty-nine (29) KIV-78 cryptographic/timing modules (twenty-three (23) installed and six (6) spares); twenty-nine (29) KY-100M cryptographic radio encryptors (twenty-three (23) installed and six (6) spares); twenty-nine (29) AN/APX-126 Combined Interrogator Transponders (twenty-three (23) installed and six (6) spares); Classified and Unclassified Computer Program Identification Numbers (CPINS) upgrades; OFP upgrades for IFF Mode 5 capable systems, Joint Mission Planning (JMPS) upgrade; Sniper Advanced Targeting Pod software, service support, support equipment, spares, and training; systems support and test equipment; spare and repair parts; publications and technical documentation; training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor engineering; logistics and technical support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated cost is \$62 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the security of a friendly country which has

been, and continues to be, an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East.

The proposed sale allows the U.S. military to support the Royal Air Force of Oman, further strengthen the U.S.-Omani military-to-military relationship, and ensure continued interoperability of forces and opportunities for bilateral training and exercises with Oman's military forces.

This proposed sale of items and services will enable Oman's twenty-three (23) F-16s currently using Mode 4 IFF to become interoperable on Mode 4/5. Mode 5 IFF allows U.S. and partner airborne and surface armed forces to conduct complimentary air operations. Incremental OFP software upgrades required to support Mode 5 will provide additional incremental improvement for other associated F-16 subsystems. Oman will have no difficulty in absorbing these upgrades into its F-16 fleet.

This proposed sale of equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The prime contractor will be Lockheed Martin of Fort Worth, Texas. There are no known offset agreements proposed in conjunction with this potential sale.

The proposed sale will not require the long-term assignment of any additional U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Oman.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-50

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. This proposed sale of items and services to upgrade Oman's F-16 aircraft will involve the release of sensitive technology related to the Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) and secure communications equipment.

2. The AN/APX-126 Combined Interrogator Transponder is an IFF dual Mode 4 and 5 capable system. It is UNCLASSIFIED unless/ until Mode 4 and/or Mode 5 operational evaluator parameters are loaded into the equipment, which are classified up to SECRET. Classified elements of the IFF system include software object code, operating characteristics, parameters, and technical data. Mode 4 and Mode 5 anti-jam performance specifications/data, software source code, algorithms, and tempest plans or reports will not be offered, released, discussed, or demonstrated.

3. KIV-78 is a crypto appliqué for Mode 5 IFF. The hardware is UNCLASSIFIED unless loaded with Mode 4 and/or Mode 5 classified elements, which are classified up to SECRET.

4. KY-100M is a cryptographic encryptor for voice radios to provide secure communication capabilities. The hardware is UNCLASSIFIED unless loaded with cryptographic keys, which are classified up to SECRET.

5. Joint Mission Planning System (JMPS) is a multi-platform, PC-based mission planning system. JMPS hardware is UNCLASSIFIED, but the software is classified up to SECRET.

6. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures that might reduce weapon system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

7. A determination has been made that Oman can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance

of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the policy justification.

8. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal are authorized for release and export to the Government of Oman.

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17-63, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Mexico for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$98.4 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

CHARLES W. HOOPER,
Lieutenant General, USA,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-63

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: The Government of Mexico.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment * \$55.0 million.

Other \$43.4 million.

Total \$98.4 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Six (6) RGM-84L Harpoon Block II Surface Launched Missiles.

Twenty-three (23) Block II Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) Tactical Missiles.

Six (6) MK 54 Mod 0 Lightweight Torpedoes.

Non-MDE includes: Also included are eight (8) MK 825 Mod 0 RAM Guided Missile Round Packs (GMRP) tri-pack shipping and storage containers; RAM Block 2 MK 44 Mod 4 Guided Missile Round Pack (GMRP); two (2) MK 32 Surface Vessel Torpedo Tubes (SVTT) triple tube launchers; two hundred and fifty (250) rounds of AA98 25 mm high explosive and semi-armor piercing ammunition; seven hundred and fifty (750) rounds A976 25mm target practice and tracer ammunition; four hundred and eighty (480) rounds of BA22 57mm high explosive programmable fuze ammunition; nine hundred and sixty (960) rounds of BA23 57mm practice ammunition; containers; spare and repair parts; support and test equipment; publications and technical documentation; personnel training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor representatives' technical assistance; engineering and logistics support services; installation services; associated electronics and hardware to control the launch of torpedoes; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Navy.

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: January 5, 2018.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Government of Mexico—Harpoon Block II Missiles, RAM Missiles, and MK 54 Torpedoes

The Government of Mexico has requested to buy six (6) RGM-84L Harpoon Block II surface launched missiles, twenty-three (23) Block II Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) tactical missiles and six (6) MK 54 Mod 0 lightweight torpedoes. Also included are eight (8) MK 825 Mod 0 RAM Guided Missile Round Packs (GMRP) tri-pack shipping and storage containers; RAM Block 2 MK 44 Mod 4 Guided Missile Round Pack (GMRP); two (2) MK 32 Surface Vessel Torpedo Tubes (SVTT) triple tube launchers; two hundred and fifty (250) rounds of AA98 25 mm high explosive and semi-armor piercing ammunition; seven hundred and fifty (750) rounds A976 25mm target practice and tracer ammunition; four hundred and eighty (480) rounds of BA22 57mm high explosive programmable fuze ammunition; nine hundred and sixty (960) rounds of BA23 57mm practice ammunition; containers; spare and repair parts; support and test equipment; publications and technical documentation; personnel training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor representatives' technical assistance; engineering and logistics support services; installation services; associated electronics and hardware to control the launch of torpedoes; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated cost is \$98.4 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping to improve the security of a strategic partner. Mexico has been a strong partner in combating organized crime and drug trafficking organizations. The sale of these ship-based systems to Mexico will significantly increase and strengthen its maritime capabilities. Mexico intends to use these defense articles and services to modernize its armed forces and expand its existing naval and maritime support of national security requirements and in its efforts to combat criminal organizations.

Mexico intends to use the weapon systems on its Mexican Navy Sigma 10514 Class ship. The systems will provide enhanced capabilities in effective defense of critical sea lanes. The proposed sale of these systems and support will increase the Mexican Navy's maritime partnership potential and align its capabilities with existing regional navies. Mexico has not purchased these systems previously. Mexico will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The equipment will be provided from U.S. stocks. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will require annual trips to Mexico involving U.S. Government personnel and contractor representatives for technical reviews, support, and oversight for approximately two years.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-63

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The MK 32 SVTT system is UNCLASSIFIED, but the system has one classified firmware card that controls launches. The system is currently in service in the U.S. Navy and in various other foreign nations that utilize shipboard launched torpedoes.

The firmware card is essential to the ability of the system to successfully launch torpedoes when directed by the shipboard command and control system.

2. The RGM-84L Harpoon Surface Launched Block II missile system, to include publications, documentation, operations, supply, maintenance, and training to be conveyed with this proposed sale have the highest classification level of CONFIDENTIAL. The Harpoon Block II missile is a non-nuclear tactical weapon system currently in service in the U.S. Navy and in 29 other foreign nations. It provides a day, night, and adverse weather, standoff surface-to-surface capability and is an effective Anti-Surface Warfare missile. The RGM-84L incorporates components, software, and technical design information that are considered SENSITIVE.

3. The following components being conveyed by the proposed sale are considered sensitive and are classified CONFIDENTIAL:

a. The Radar Seeker

b. The GPS/INS System

c. Operational Flight Program Software

d. Missile operational characteristics and performance data

These elements are essential for the Harpoon Block II missile to selectively engage hostile targets under a wide range of operational, tactical and environmental conditions. The version being sold to Mexico is not the Coastal Target Suppression land attack missile version.

4. MK 54 All-Up-Round Lightweight (Warshot) torpedoes and associated support equipment, training, test equipment, and technical support; Recoverable Exercise Torpedoes (REXTORPs); and Exercise Torpedoes (EXTORPs) are associated with this sale. The MK 54 Lightweight Torpedo (LWT) can be launched from surface ships, helicopters, and fixed wing aircraft. The MK 54 LWT is an upgrade to the MK 46 Torpedo. The MK 54 LWT contains new sonar, guidance and control systems with modern technology. The new guidance and control system uses a mixture of commercial-off-the-shelf and custom-built electronics. The warhead, fuel tank, and propulsion system from the MK 46 torpedo are re-used in the MK 54 configuration with minor modifications. The MK 54 is highly effective against modern diesel and nuclear submarines. It has advanced logic that allows it to detect and prosecute threat submarines operating in challenging littoral environments. It is also effective in the presence of advanced countermeasures that may be deployed by threat submarines. The assembled MK 54 torpedo and several of its individual components are classified CONFIDENTIAL. The MK 54 operational software is classified as SECRET as is any hardware upon which the software has been installed. Mexico has not requested nor will it be provided the source code for the MK 54 operational software. The MK 54 has a feature referred to as "Memory Scuttle" that erases the operational software at the conclusion of any exercise firing so that the software will not be compromised if the torpedo is not recovered after the exercise firing. Possession of MK 54 Torpedoes and associated equipment should not lead to any vulnerability disclosures.

5. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures or equivalent systems which might reduce weapon system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

6. A determination has been made that the Government of Mexico can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This proposed sale is necessary to the furtherance of the U.S. foreign

policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

7. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal are authorized for release and export to the Government of Mexico.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SANDRA BOARDMAN

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Sandra Boardman of Chinook, MT. Originally from Chinook, Sandi has served as the Blaine County clerk and recorder for 44 years. As she steps into retirement, she will be remembered for her many years of service.

Thank you, Sandi, for your commitment to Blaine County and Montana. Your years of dedication and service show the true meaning of being a Montanan, and, for that, I am very grateful. You are an inspiration to us all. Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement, and I wish you all the best in the days ahead.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:04 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 678, resolving that the Clerk of the House inform the Senate that a quorum of the House is present and that the House is ready to proceed with business.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 4:09 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 3759. An act to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a Family Caregiving Strategy, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

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-3918. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Activities, Progress and Plans: September 2013 to August 2016"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3919. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Rough Service Lamps and Vibration Service Lamps" (Docket No. EERE-2017-BT-STD-0057) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3920. A communication from the Division Chief of Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of

Land Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Effectuating Congressional Nullification of the Resource Management Planning Rule Under the Congressional Review Act" (RIN1004-AE39) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3921. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Hazardous Waste Management System; User Fees for the Electronic Hazardous Waste Manifest System and Amendments to Manifest Regulations" ((RIN2050-AG80) (FRL No. 9965-27-OLEM)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3922. 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 Louisiana's Request to Relax the Federal Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) Gasoline Volatility Standard for Several Parishes" ((RIN2060-AT61) (FRL No. 9971-92-OAR)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3923. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Public Notification Requirements for Combined Sewer Overflows to the Great Lakes Basin" ((RIN2040-AF67) (FRL No. 9972-51-OW)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3924. 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: Refrigerant Management Regulations for Small Cans of Motor Vehicle Refrigerant" ((RIN2060-AT43) (FRL No. 9972-48-OAR)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3925. 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: Refrigerant Management Regulations for Small Cans of Motor Vehicle Refrigerant" ((RIN2060-AT43) (FRL No. 9972-48-OAR)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3926. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for Wool Fiberglass Manufacturing; Rotary Spin Lines Technology Review and Revision of Flame Attenuation Lines Standards" ((RIN2060-AT13) (FRL No. 9972-44-OAR)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3927. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmit-

ting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Full Withdrawal of Approval and Promulgation of State Air Quality Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; City of Philadelphia; Control of Emissions from Existing Sewage Sludge Incineration Units" (FRL No. 9972-52-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3928. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Community Right-to-Know; Adopting 2017 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Codes for Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Reporting; Final Rule" ((RIN2070-AK32) (FRL No. 9970-02)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3929. 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 Tennessee's Request to Relax the Federal Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) Gasoline Volatility Standard for Shelby County (Memphis)" ((RIN2060-AT69) (FRL No. 9972-06-OAR)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3930. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; Continuous Opacity Monitoring Requirements for Municipal Waste Combustors; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule" (FRL No. 9972-55-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3931. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Oklahoma: Final Approval of State Underground Storage Tank Program Revisions and Incorporation by Reference" (FRL No. 9972-29-Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3932. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Determination to Defer Sanctions; Arizona Department of Environmental Quality; PM_{2.5}" (FRL No. 9972-78-Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3933. 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 Nevada Air Plan Revisions, Washoe Oxygenated Fuels Program" (FRL No. 9972-82-Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3934. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Quality Designation for the 2010

Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards - Round 3” (FRL No. 9972-73-OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3935. 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; NC; Open Burning and Miscellaneous Revisions” (FRL No. 9972-85-Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3936. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy for the position of Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3937. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Medicare Program; Medicare Shared Savings Program: Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Policies for Performance Year 2017” ((RIN0938-AT51) (CMS-1702-IFC)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3938. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of a group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the Secretary of State (OSS-2017-1316); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3939. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of a group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the Secretary of State (OSS-2018-0009); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3940. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2017-0214 - 2017-0219); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3941. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2018-0001 - 2018-0006); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3942. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of Inertial Measurement Units to the Republic of Korea for integration into 2.75 inch guided rockets by the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 16-088); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3943. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the

export of Intelligence and Surveillance Aircraft and associated Ground Stations to the Republic of Algeria in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 16-140); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3944. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of Model 249 5.56 caliber machine guns, Model M2 HB QCB, .50 caliber machine guns, and accessories to the United Arab Emirates in the amount of \$1,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 16-012); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3945. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of automatic carbines, M16A1 rifles, grenade launchers, sound and flash suppressors, scopes, maintenance training, and parts and accessories for Bahrain in the amount of \$1,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17-043); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3946. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of Machine Gun Reflex Sights to Jordan in the amount of \$1,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17-046); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3947. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, Secretary of Labor’s response to the Office of the Ombudsman’s 2015 Annual Report; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3948. A communication from the General Counsel, National Endowment for the Humanities, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Chairperson, National Endowment for Humanities, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3949. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records” (RIN0930-ZA07) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 4, 2018; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3950. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Safety and Effectiveness of Health Care Antiseptics; Topical Antimicrobial Drug Products for Over-the-Counter Human Use” ((RIN0910-AH40) (Docket No. FDA-2015-N-0101)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3951. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3952. A communication from the Deputy Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Missing Participants” (RIN1212-AB13) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3953. 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 “Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Valuation of Benefits and Assets; Expected Retirement Age” (29 CFR Part 4044) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3954. 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 “Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits” (29 CFR Parts 4022 and 4044) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3955. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-214, “Closing of a Public Alley in Square 772, S.O. 16-25615, Act of 2017”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3956. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-215, “Closing of a Public Alley in Square 3594, S.O. 16-25309, Act of 2017”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3957. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-216, “Ward 4 Full-Service Grocery Store Amendment Act of 2017”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3958. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-217, “Lincoln Court Designation Act of 2017”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3959. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-218, “Union Market Tax Increment Financing Act of 2017”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3960. A communication from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to mileage reimbursement rates for Federal employees who use privately owned vehicles while on official travel; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3961. A communication from the Executive Director, Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Privacy Act Regulations” (RIN3219-AA00) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3962. A communication from the Director of the Office of Financial Reporting and Internal Controls, Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "FY 2017 Agency Financial Report"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3963. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae) management report for the fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3964. A communication from the Director of Public Affairs, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Service's fiscal year 2017 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation (No FEAR) Act of 2002; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3965. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Resolution 22-299, "Transfer of Jurisdiction of U.S. Reservation 724 (Lots 896 and 897 in Square 620) Emergency Approval Resolution of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3966. A communication from the Chairman, National Mediation Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Annual Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3967. A communication from the Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's fiscal year 2016 FAIR Act Commercial and Inherently Governmental Activities Inventory; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3968. A communication from the Acting Director, Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's fiscal year 2017 Agency Financial Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3969. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Blended Retirement System" (5 CFR Parts 1600, 1601, 1603, 1605, 1650, 1651, and 1690) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3970. A communication from the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Housing and Urban Development 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-3971. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report from the Attorney General to Congress relative to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC-3972. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report from the Attorney General to Congress relative to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absen-

tee Voting Act; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC-3973. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting proposed legislation; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-3974. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Yellowfin Sole for Vessels Participating in the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Fishery in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area" (RIN0648-XF468) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3975. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery; Closure of the Elephant Trunk Flex Access Area to General Category Individual Fishing Quota Scallop Vessels" (RIN0648-XF409) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3976. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2017 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack" (RIN0648-XF493) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3977. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic; 2017 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for South Atlantic Yellowtail Snapper" (RIN0648-XF465) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3978. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; American Plaice Trimester Total Allowable Catch Area Closure for the Common Pool Fishery" (RIN0648-XF467) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3979. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Bering Sea Subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area" (RIN0648-XF714) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3980. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Northeastern United

States; Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery; 2017 Illex Squid Quota Harvested" (RIN0648-XF672) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3981. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Scup Fishery; Adjustments to the 2017 Winter II Quota" (RIN0648-XF651) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3982. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; 'Other Flatfish' in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area" (RIN0648-XF580) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3983. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Alaska Plaice in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area" (RIN0648-XF579) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3984. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Sculpins in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area" (RIN0648-XF731) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3985. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pollock in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands" (RIN0648-XF509) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3986. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries Off West Coast States; Modifications of the West Coast Commercial and Recreational Salmon Fisheries; Inseason Actions #12 Through #18" (RIN0648-XF715) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3987. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Atlantic Highly Migratory species; Commercial Aggregated Large Coastal Shark and Hammerhead Shark Management Group Retention Limit Adjustment" (RIN0648-XF501) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on

December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3988. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region; 2017–2018 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for King Mackerel in the Gulf of Mexico Western Zone” (RIN0648–XF735) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3989. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2017 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for South Atlantic Snowy Grouper” (RIN0648–XF492) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3990. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2017 Accountability Measure-Based Closures for Commercial and Recreational Species in the U.S. Caribbean Off Puerto Rico” (RIN0648–XF488) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3991. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Shortraker Rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska” (RIN0648–XF761) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3992. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pollock in the Bering Sea Subarea” (RIN0648–XF614) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3993. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Sablefish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska” (RIN0648–XF756) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3994. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area” (RIN0648–XF654) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3995. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Depart-

ment of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Georges Bank Cod Possession and Trip Limit Adjustment for the Common Pool Fishery” (RIN0648–XF713) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3996. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Georges Bank Cod Trimester Total Allowable Catch Area Closure for the Common Pool Fishery” (RIN0648–XF586) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3997. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries” (RIN0648–XF634) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3998. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Provisions; Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Groundfish Fishery; Fishing Year 2017; Emergency Removal of Southern Windowpane Accountability Measures” (RIN0648–BH11) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3999. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic; Re-Opening of the Commercial Sector for Blueline Tilefish” (RIN0648–XF758) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4000. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0476) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4001. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0709) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4002. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to

law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0708) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4003. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0556) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4004. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0622) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4005. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–1104) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4006. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0714) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4007. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0340) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4008. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0473) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4009. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Services B.V. Airplanes” (RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–1097) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4010. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal

Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Services B.V. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-1098)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4011. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Services B.V. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-1103)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4012. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; CFM International S.A. Turboprop Engines" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-1044)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4013. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc Turboprop Engines" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-1117)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4014. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Regional Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-1101)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4015. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Alexander Schleicher GmbH and Co. Segelflugzeugbau Gliders" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0911)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4016. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of the Prohibition Against Certain Flights in Specified Areas of the Sanaa (OYSC) Flight Information Region" ((RIN2120-AL27) (Docket No. FAA-2015-8672)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4017. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extension of the Prohibition Against Certain Flights in

the Territory and Airspace of Somalia" ((RIN2120-AL28) (Docket No. FAA-2007-27602)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4018. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Stevens Point, WI" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0143)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4019. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Twin Bridges, MT" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0737)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4020. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Kaunakakai, HI" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0295)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4021. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (137); Amdt. No. 3775" (RIN2120-AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4022. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (15); Amdt. No. 3776" (RIN2120-AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4023. A communication from the Associate Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Mobility Fund Phase II Challenge Process Handsets and Access Procedures for the Challenge Process Portal" ((WC Docket No. 10-90 and WT Docket No. 10-208) (DA 17-1218)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 28, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4024. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy for the position of Chief Financial Officer, Department of Transportation, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on

January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4025. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy for the position of Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 2, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4026. A communication from the Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Board's competitive sourcing efforts for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-151. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to encourage the United States Department of Agriculture to revise existing policies that promote the waste of water after an irrigated crop has been declared a failure; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 31

Whereas, among the most urgent and costly issues facing Texas is drought, which recently has caused a number of crop failures on irrigated land; those occurrences have highlighted the necessity for policies that promote responsible water usage and water conservation; and

Whereas, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, managed by the Risk Management Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, supports the economic stability of agriculture through its crop insurance program, which assists American farmers and agricultural entities in managing risk and the threat of natural disasters; in the event of a crop failure, however, current FCIC policy requires farmers to demonstrate good faith practices, which include watering the failed crop, in order to qualify for insurance benefits; and

Whereas, the USDA could further help sustain the agricultural industry and our precious water resources by developing provisions that encourage water conservation when crop failures occur; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to encourage the U.S. Department of Agriculture to revise existing policies that promote the waste of water after an irrigated crop has been declared a failure; and be it further

Resolved, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the secretary of agriculture, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, to the chair of the House Committee on Agriculture and the chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, and to all members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-152. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to bestow on

Doris “Dorie” Miller the Congressional Medal of Honor; to the Committee on Armed Services.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 45

Whereas, During the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Petty Officer Doris Miller of the U.S. Navy demonstrated valor above and beyond the call of duty, and he is long past due for full recognition of his extraordinary courage and initiative on that day; and

Whereas, A native of Texas, Doris “Dorie” Miller was born in Waco on October 12, 1919, to Henrietta and Conery Miller; he was a fullback on the football team at Moore High School in Waco, and he went on to work on his father’s farm; and

Whereas, In September 1939, Mr. Miller enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a way to see the world and earn money for his family; at that time, African Americans were only permitted to perform menial tasks in the Navy, so Mr. Miller was trained as a mess attendant at the Naval Training Station in Norfolk, Virginia; after a brief assignment on the ammunition ship USS *Pyro*, he was transferred in January 1940 to the battleship USS *West Virginia*, where he won distinction among the crew as the ship’s heavyweight boxing champion; his rank at the time was mess attendant, second class; and

Whereas, Mr. Miller rose at 6 a.m. on the morning of December 7, 1941, and he was collecting laundry when the Japanese attack began and the alarm for general quarters was sounded; even mess attendants had a battle station, but Mr. Miller’s, an anti-aircraft battery magazine, had already been destroyed by a torpedo, so he went up on deck where, as the ship began to sink, he hauled wounded shipmates through oil and water to safety on the quarterdeck; he was then ordered to the bridge, where he picked up the ship’s mortally wounded captain and carried him to an aid station; and

Whereas, Mr. Miller then returned to the bridge, and on his own initiative, he began firing a .50-caliber Browning anti-aircraft machine gun at the attacking Japanese planes; he had never trained on the weapon, but, as he reported later, “It wasn’t hard, I just pulled the trigger and she worked fine”; with no concern for his own safety, he continued firing until the gun’s ammunition ran out, possibly bringing down one of the enemy aircraft; in the meantime, the *West Virginia* had been hit by five enemy torpedoes, and Mr. Miller was finally forced to abandon ship with his surviving crewmates; and

Whereas, In the aftermath of the attack, Mr. Miller was commended by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, and on May 27, 1942, he became the first African American to receive the Navy Cross, the service’s second-highest honor, which was personally presented to him by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the commander of the Pacific Fleet; he went on to serve on the USS *Indianapolis* and then the USS *Liscome Bay*; that ship was sunk by a Japanese submarine on November 24, 1943, and though his body was never recovered, Mr. Miller was eventually listed among the 646 sailors who died that day; at the time of his death, his rank was cook, third class; and

Whereas, In the years since, Mr. Miller’s actions have become an important part of the legacy of Pearl Harbor; during the war, a poster from the U.S. Office of War Information featured his image and urged African Americans to join the war effort, and in 1973, a Knox-class frigate was christened the USS *Miller* in his honor; in 1991, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority dedicated a bronze plaque to him at the U.S. Naval Base in Pearl Harbor, and in 2001, he was portrayed by the actor Cuba Gooding Jr. in the blockbuster film, *Pearl Harbor*; more recently, his story has

been featured prominently in the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.; in addition to the Navy Cross, he was also entitled to the Purple Heart, the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal; and

Whereas, In 1939, when the clouds of world war were gathering in Europe and Asia, Dorie Miller chose to enlist in a Navy that did not trust black men to serve in combat, and at a moment of direst need, he picked up a weapon he had never used before and fought back against a savage enemy, performing brilliantly and courageously under fire in defense of his ship, his crewmates, and his nation; his valiant service on that day, and afterwards, warrants the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a member of the armed forces of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby urge the United States Congress to bestow on Doris “Dorie” Miller the Congressional Medal of Honor; and be it further

Resolved, That the secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the secretary of the Navy, to the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president of the Senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-153. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas expressing support for the development and construction of a coastal barrier to protect the Gulf Coast region of Texas from storm surges, to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 106

Whereas, Texas has been the nation’s top exporting state for the last 14 consecutive years, with an estimated \$650 billion in trade in 2015 alone; exports support some 1.6 million jobs and contribute over \$200 billion to the gross state product; and

Whereas, the Gulf Coast region of Texas plays a crucial role in the prosperity of the state, as it is home not only to the largest concentration of petrochemical manufacturing and refining facilities in the United States but also to the federal Strategic Petroleum Reserve and a vital supply of aviation jet fuel for military and commercial use; in addition, Texas ports along the Gulf Coast are integral to the chemical manufacturing industry and to both the state and national economies; and

Whereas, this Gulf Coast region, however, is vulnerable to major weather events, including intense hurricanes, which in the recent past have devastated area cities by causing significant loss of life, destroying residential and commercial property, damaging sensitive ecosystems, and weakening local economies; and

Whereas, in response to the havoc wreaked by Hurricanes Ike and Rita, researchers at the Center for Texas Beaches and Shores at Texas A&M University at Galveston designed the Coastal Spine; plans for implementing the structure have included consideration of scientific research, historical storm data, and existing systems; moreover, the environmental impact such an apparatus would have on the surrounding area and waterway is being vigorously evaluated, and the study is expected to be completed in the summer of 2017; and

Whereas, the Gulf Coast Community Protection and Recovery District, composed of

Orange, Jefferson, Chambers, Harris, Galveston, and Brazoria Counties, was created by Governor Rick Perry in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike; its board, which represents more than 6.5 million residents who live in the upper Gulf Coast area, has determined that the Coastal Spine is the best method for protecting against storm surges along the Texas coast; the concept has also gained widespread support from residents, businesses, and elected officials throughout the coastal region; and

Whereas, the General Land Office of the State of Texas is committed to partnering with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to implement the construction of the Coastal Spine; and

Whereas, the Texas Legislature is committed to the creation of a special purpose district within the Gulf Coast Region in order to fund the ongoing operations and maintenance of any structures and facilities related to the Coastal Spine; and

Whereas, the potential benefits of the Coastal Spine are manifold, ranging from preserving life and property to spurring economic growth and cutting state expenses for disaster assistance, and it is necessary for the U.S. government to provide aid and support for further research, design, and construction of the coastal barrier; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby express its support for the development and construction of a coastal barrier to protect the Gulf Coast region of Texas from storm surges; and be it further

Resolved, That the Texas Legislature hereby urge the United States Congress to provide sufficient federal funding for the construction of the project; and be it further

Resolved, That the Texas Legislature hereby urge the U.S. Congress to expedite the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers design and construction process; and be it further

Resolved, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-154. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Wisconsin applying to the United States Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the United States Constitution, for the calling of a convention for proposing amendments, for the limited purpose of requiring the federal government to operate under a balanced budget, to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 21

Whereas, previous presidential administrations and Congress have allowed an unprecedented amount of federal debt to accumulate, which currently exceeds \$20 trillion; and

Whereas, a report by President Obama’s National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform issued a warning on the debt levels, stating: “If the U.S. does not put its house in order, the reckoning will be sure and the devastation severe”; and

Whereas, the Constitution of the United States does not currently require the federal government to operate under a balanced budget; and

Whereas, members of both political parties and both houses of Congress have called for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States to no avail; and

Whereas, Article V of the Constitution of the United States authorizes the legislatures

of the states to convene a convention for proposing amendments upon the passage of 34 state resolutions; and

Whereas, 49 states, by constitution or statute, require a balanced budget; and

Whereas, the legislature of the State of Wisconsin supports the federal government operating under a balanced budget; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the legislature of the State of Wisconsin herewith respectfully applies to Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the Constitution of the United States, for the calling of a convention for proposing amendments, for the limited purpose of requiring the federal government to operate under a balanced budget; and, be it further

Resolved, That the senate chief clerk and the assembly chief clerk, jointly, are hereby directed to forward a proper authenticated copy of this resolution to the President of the Senate of the United States, and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States; and, be it further

Resolved, That this resolution constitutes a continuing application for a convention for proposing amendments in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States until such a convention is convened on the same subject or until the legislature of the State of Wisconsin rescinds this resolution.

POM-155. A petition from a citizen of the State of Texas relative to immigration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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. RISCH (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2283. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to strengthen the Office of Credit Risk Management within the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2284. A bill to strengthen Buy American requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. McCONNELL:

S. Res. 369. A resolution to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. Res. 370. A resolution to constitute the minority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 108

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Tennessee

(Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 108, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 266

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 266, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Anwar Sadat in recognition of his heroic achievements and courageous contributions to peace in the Middle East.

S. 521

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 521, a bill to make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available at a discount to veterans.

S. 528

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 528, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide leave because of the death of a son or daughter.

S. 681

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the benefits and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to women veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 783

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 783, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to distribute maternity care health professionals to health professional shortage areas identified as in need of maternity care health services.

S. 999

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 999, a bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to permanently prohibit the conduct of offshore drilling on the outer Continental Shelf in the Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, North Atlantic, and Straits of Florida planning areas.

S. 1419

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1419, a bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1870

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1870, a bill to amend the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 to secure urgent resources vital to Indian victims of crime, and for other purposes.

S. 2174

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2174, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the Veterans Crisis Line.

S. 2203

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2203, a bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration.

S. 2255

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2255, a bill to reauthorize title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to improve and encourage innovation in international education, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 368

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 368, a resolution supporting the right of all Iranian citizens to have their voices heard.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 369—TO CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS, OR UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS ARE CHOSEN

Mr. McCONNELL submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES 369

Resolved, That the following shall constitute the majority party's membership on the following committees for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Mr. Roberts, Mr. Cochran, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Hoeven, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Thune, Mr. Daines, Mr. Perdue, Mrs. Fischer.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. McCain, Mr. Inhofe, Mr. Wicker, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Rounds, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Graham, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Scott.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Crapo, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Corker, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Heller, Mr. Scott, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Moran.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES: Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Barrasso, Mr. Risch, Mr. Lee, Mr. Flake, Mr. Daines, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Portman, Mrs. Capito.

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Enzi, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Graham, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Corker, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Cotton.

SENATE RESOLUTION 370—TO CONSTITUTE THE MINORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS, OR UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS ARE CHOSEN

Mr. SCHUMER submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 370

Resolved, That the following shall constitute the minority party's membership on the following committees for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Leahy, Mr. Brown, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Casey, Ms. Smith.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Leahy, Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Reed, Mr. Tester, Mr. Udall, Mrs. Shaheen, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Coons, Mr. Schatz, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Manchin, Mr. Van Hollen.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. Reed, Mr. Nelson, Mrs. McCaskill, Mrs. Shaheen, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Kaine, Mr. King, Mr. Heinrich, Ms. Warren, Mr. Peters.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Brown, Mr. Reed, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Tester, Mr. Warner, Ms. Warren, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Donnelly, Mr. Schatz, Mr. Van Hollen, Ms. Cortez Masto, Mr. Jones.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION: Mr. Nelson, Ms. Cantwell, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Schatz, Mr. Markey, Mr. Udall, Mr. Peters, Ms. Baldwin, Ms. Duckworth, Ms. Hassan, Ms. Cortez Masto, Mr. Tester.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES: Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Wyden, Mr. Sanders, Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Manchin, Mr. Heinrich, Ms. Hirono, Mr. King, Ms. Duckworth, Ms. Cortez Masto, Ms. Smith.

COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Carper, Mr. Cardin, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Merkley, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Booker, Mr. Markey, Ms. Duckworth, Mr. Van Hollen.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Mr. Wyden, Ms. Stabenow, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Carper, Mr. Cardin, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Casey, Mr. Warner, Mrs. McCaskill, Mr. Whitehouse.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: Mr. Cardin, Mr. Menendez, Mrs. Shaheen, Mr. Coons, Mr. Udall, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Kaine, Mr. Markey, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Booker.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mrs. Murray, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Casey, Mr. Bennet, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Warren, Mr. Kaine, Ms. Hassan, Ms. Smith, Mr. Jones.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Mrs. McCaskill, Mr. Carper, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Peters, Ms. Hassan, Ms. Harris, Mr. Jones.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Mr. Warner (Vice Chairman), Mrs. Feinstein, Mr.

Wyden, Mr. Heinrich, Mr. King, Mr. Manchin, Ms. Harris, Mr. Schumer (ex officio), and Mr. Reed (ex officio).

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Leahy, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Whitehouse, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Coons, Mr. Blumenthal, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Booker, Ms. Harris.

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Sanders, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Wyden, Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Warner, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Kaine, Mr. King, Mr. Van Hollen, Ms. Harris.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION: Ms. Klobuchar, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Udall, Mr. Warner, Mr. Leahy, Mr. King, Ms. Cortez Masto.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Mrs. Shaheen, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Cardin, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Markey, Mr. Booker, Mr. Coons, Ms. Hirono, Ms. Duckworth.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS: Mr. Tester, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Brown, Mr. Blumenthal, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Manchin.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING: Mr. Casey, Mr. Nelson, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Warren, Ms. Cortez Masto, Mr. Jones.

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE: Mr. Heinrich, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Peters, Ms. Hassan.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mr. Coons (Vice Chairman), Mr. Schatz, Mrs. Shaheen.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Udall (Vice Chairman), Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Tester, Mr. Schatz, Ms. Heitkamp, Ms. Cortez Masto, Ms. Smith.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have 5 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, January 09, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Combating Money Laundering and other forms of illicit Finance: Opportunities to reform and strengthen BSA Enforcement."

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 09, 2018, at 10 a.m. to consider the nomination of Alex Michael Azar II, of Indiana, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

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, January 09, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "The Opioid Crisis: An Examination of How We Got Here and How We Move Forward."

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during

the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 09, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE, TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, HUMANS RIGHTS AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

The Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Humans Rights and Global Women's Issues of the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 09, 2018, at 10 a.m. to hold a hearing entitled "Attacks on U.S. Diplomats in Cuba: Response and Oversight."

TO CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

TO CONSTITUTE THE MINORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following resolutions en bloc: S. Res. 369 and S. Res. 370.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolutions by title en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 369) to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

A resolution (S. Res. 370) to constitute the minority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions (S. Res. 369 and S. Res. 370) were agreed to.

(The resolutions are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

**ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 10, 2018**

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, January 10; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following

leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Parker nomination; further, that all time during adjournment, recess, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Parker nomination; further, that all postcloture time on the Parker nomination be considered expired at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow and the Senate vote on confirmation of the Parker nomination with no intervening action or debate; finally, 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.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

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

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:27 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, January 10, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate January 9, 2018:

THE JUDICIARY

WILLIAM L. CAMPBELL, JR., OF TENNESSEE, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE.